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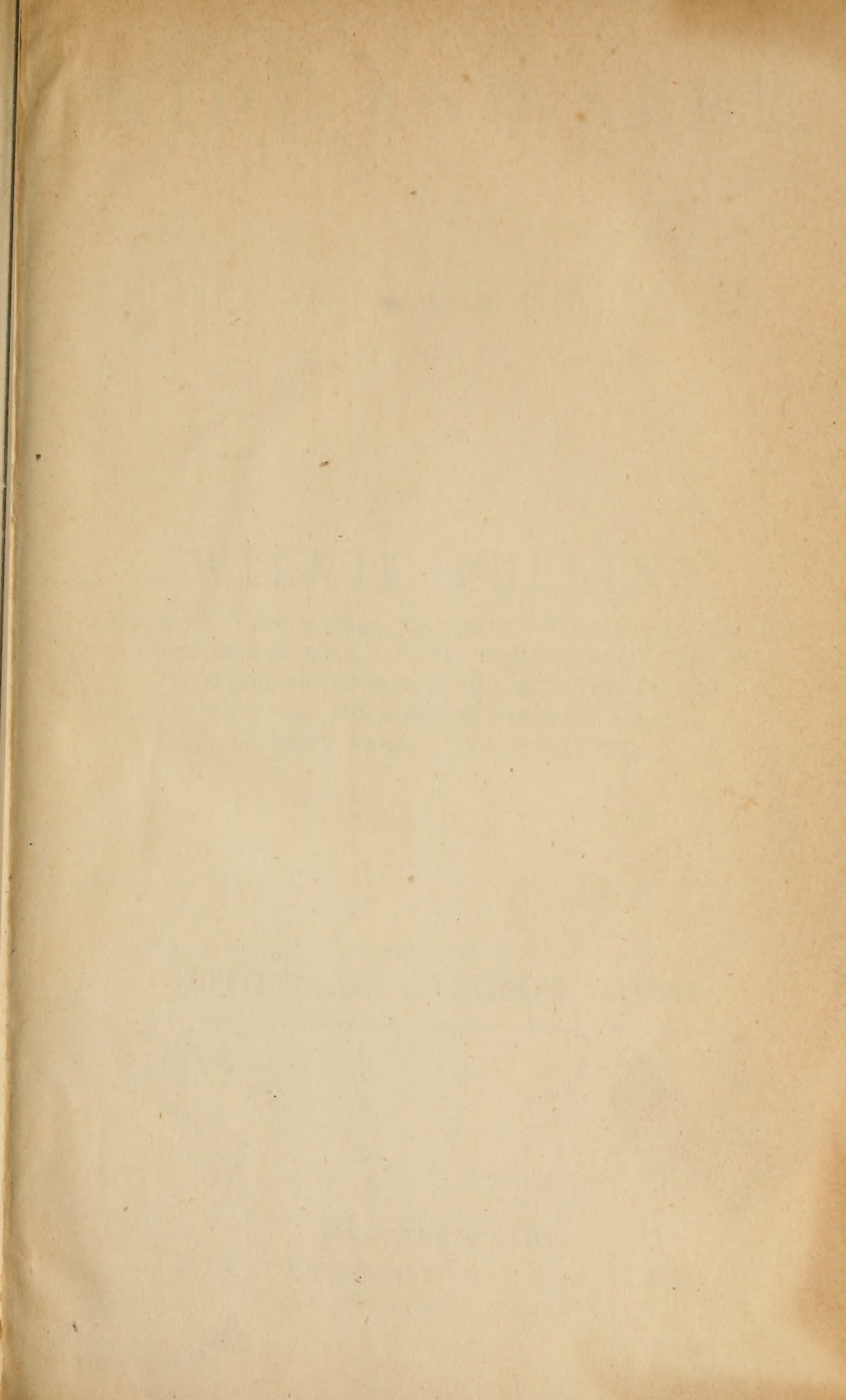




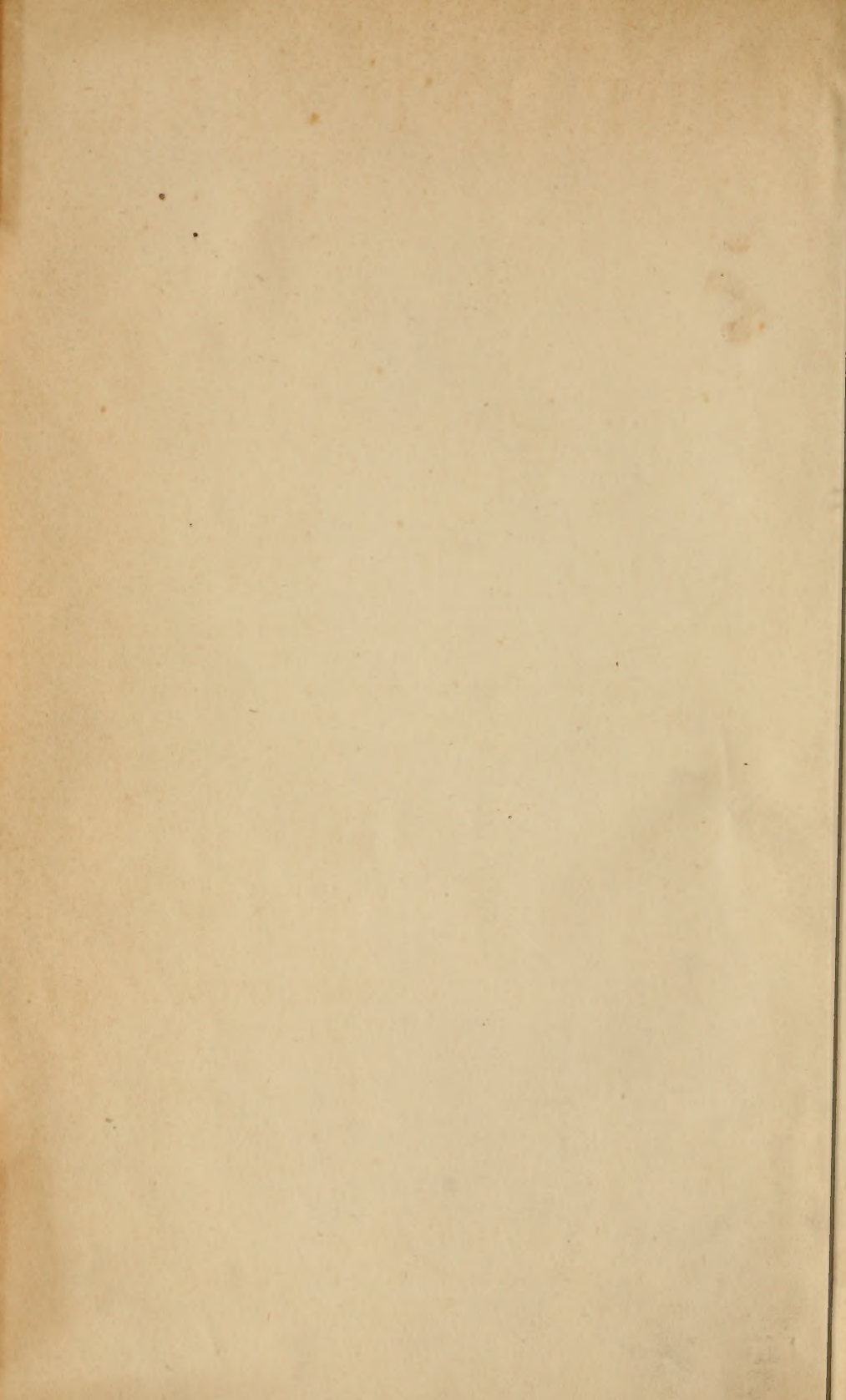














# HIDE AND SEEK.

A NOVEL.

BY

WILKIE COLLINS.

AUTHOR OF "THE WOMAN IN WHITE," "THE DEAD SECRET."  
"THE STOLEN MASK," "THE CROSSED PATH," "SISTER  
ROSE; OR, THE OMINOUS MARRIAGE," "THE YELLOW  
MASK; OR, THE GHOST OF THE BALL ROOM,"  
"AFTER DARK," "NO NAME," ETC.

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COMPLETE AND UNABRIDGED EDITION

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Philadelphia:  
T. B. PETERSON & BROTHERS;  
306 CHESTNUT STREET.

HIDE AND SEEK.

WILKIE COLLINS.

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202 CHANTRY STREET.



# HIDE AND SEEK.

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## OPENING CHAPTER.

### A CHILD'S SUNDAY.

AT a quarter to one o'clock, on a wet Sunday afternoon, in November, 1837, Samuel Snoxell, page to Mr. Zachary Thorpe, of Baregrove square, London, left the area gate with three umbrellas under his arm, to meet his master and mistress at the church-door, on the conclusion of morning service. Snoxell had been especially directed by the housemaid to distribute his three umbrellas in the following manner: the new silk umbrella was to be given to Mr. and Mrs. Thorpe; the old silk umbrella was to be handed to Mr. Goodworth, Mrs. Thorpe's father; and the heavy gingham was to be kept by Snoxell himself, for the special protection of "Master Zack," aged six years, and the only child of Mr. Thorpe. Furnished with these instructions, the page set forth in gloomy silence on his way to the church.

The morning had been fine for November; but before midday the clouds had gathered, the rain had begun, and the regular fog of the season had closed dingily over the wet streets, far and near. The garden in the middle of Baregrove square, with its close-cut turf, its vacant beds, its bran-new rustic seats, its withered young trees that had not yet grown as high as the railings around them, seemed to be absolutely rotting away in yellow mist and softly steady rain, and was deserted even by the cats. The blinds were drawn down for the most part in every house; what light came from the sky came like light seen through dusty glass; the grim brown hue of the brick fronts looked more dirtily mournful than ever; the smoke from the chimney-pots was lost mysteriously in deepening superincumbent fog; the muddy gutters gurgled; the heavy rain-drops dripped into empty areas audibly. No object great or small, no out-of-door litter whatever appeared anywhere, to break the dismal uniformity of line and substance in the perspective of the square. No living

being moved over the watery pavement, save the melancholy Snoxell. He plodded on into a crescent, and still the awful Sunday solitude spread grimly humid all around him. He next entered a street with some shops in it; and here, at last, some consoling signs of human life attracted his attention. He now saw the crossing-sweeper of the district (off duty till church came out) smoking a pipe under the covered way that led to a mews. He detected, through half-closed shutters, a chemist's apprentice yawning over a large book. He passed a navigator, an ostler, and two costermongers wandering wearily backward and forward before a closed public-house door. He heard the heavy *clop clop* of thickly-booted feet advancing behind him, and a stern voice growling, "Now then! be off with you, or you'll get locked up!" and, looking round, saw an orange-girl, guilty of having obstructed an empty pavement by sitting on the curb-stone, driven along before a policeman who was followed admiringly by a ragged boy gnawing a piece of orange-peel. Having delayed a moment to watch this Sunday procession of three with melancholy curiosity as it moved by him, Snoxell was about to turn the corner of a street which led directly to the church, when a shrill series of cries in a child's voice struck on his ear and stopped his progress immediately.

The page stood stock-still in astonishment for an instant, then grinned (for the first time that morning), pulled the new silk umbrella from under his arm, and turned the corner in a violent hurry. His suspicions had not deceived him. There was Mr. Thorpe himself walking sternly homeward through the rain, before church was over, and leading by the hand "Master Zack," who was trotting along under protest, with his hat half off his head, hanging as far back from his father's side as he possibly could, and howling all the time with the utmost power of a very powerful pair of lungs.

Mr. Thorpe stopped as he passed the page, and snatched the umbrella out of Snoxell's



hand, with unaccustomed impetuosity; then said sharply, "Go to your mistress, go on to the church;" and then resumed his road home, dragging his son after him faster than ever.

"Snoxy! Snoxy!" screamed Master Zack viciously (he had learned that nick-name from the nursemaid), "I say, Snoxy!" turning round toward the page, so that he tripped himself up and fell against his father's legs at every third step, "I've been a naughty boy at church!"

"Well, you look like it, you do," muttered Snoxel to himself sarcastically, as he went on; "Snoxy, too! I'll be even with Martha some day for teaching you that, Master Zack." With these sentiments, the page approached the church portico, and waited sulkily among his fellow-servants and their umbrellas for the congregation to come out.

When Mr. Goodworth and Mrs. Thorpe left the church, the old gentleman, regardless of appearances, seized eagerly on the despised gingham, as the largest umbrella he could get, and took his daughter home under it in triumph. Mrs. Thorpe was very silent, and sighed dolefully once or twice, when her father's attention wandered from her to the people passing along the street.

"You're fretting about Zack," said the old gentleman, looking round suddenly at his daughter. "Never mind! leave it to me, I'll undertake to beg him off this time."

"It's very disheartening and shocking to find him behaving so," said Mrs. Thorpe, "after the careful way we've brought him up in, too!"

"Nonsense, my love! No, I don't mean that, I beg your pardon. But who can be surprised that a child of six years old should be tired of a sermon forty minutes long by my watch? I was tired of it myself, I know, though I wasn't candid enough to show it as the boy did. There! there! we won't begin to argue: I'll beg Zack off this time, and then we'll say no more about it."

Mr. Goodworth's announcement of his benevolent intentions toward Zack seemed to have very little effect on Mrs. Thorpe; but she said nothing on that subject or any other during the rest of the dreary walk home, through rain, fog, and mud, to Baregrove square.

Rooms have their mysterious peculiarities of physiognomy as well as men. There are plenty of rooms, all of much the same size, all furnished in much the same manner, which, nevertheless, differ completely in expression (if such a term may be allowed) one from the other, reflecting the various characters of their inhabitants by such fine varieties of effect in the furniture-features generally common to all, as are often, like the infinitesimal varieties of eyes, noses, and mouths, too intricately minute to be

traceable. Now, the parlor of Mr. Thorpe's house was neat, clean, comfortably and sensibly furnished. It was of the average size. It had the usual side-board, dining-table, looking-glass, scroll fender, marble chimney-piece with a clock on it, carpet with a drugget over it, and wire window-blinds to keep people from looking in, characteristic of all respectable London parlors of the middle class. And yet, it was an inveterately severe-looking room—a room that seemed as if it had never been convivial, never uproarious, never anything but sternly comfortable and serenely dull: a room that appeared to be as unconscious of acts of mercy, and easy, unreasoning, over-affectionate forgiveness to offenders of any kind—juvenile or otherwise—as if it had been a cell in Newgate, or a private torturing chamber in the Inquisition. Perhaps Mr. Goodworth felt thus affected by the parlor, especially in November weather, as soon as he entered it, for, although he had promised to beg Zack off, although Mr. Thorpe was sitting alone by the table and accessible to petitions, with a book in his hand, the old gentleman hesitated uneasily for a minute or two, and suffered his daughter to speak first.

"Where is Zack?" asked Mrs. Thorpe, glancing quickly and nervously all round her.

"He is locked up in my dressing-room," answered her husband without taking his eyes off his book.

"In your dressing-room!" echoed Mrs. Thorpe, looking as startled and horrified as if she had received a blow instead of an answer; "in your dressing-room! Good heavens, Zachary! how do you know the child hasn't got at your razors?"

"They are locked up," rejoined Mr. Thorpe, with the mildest reproof in his voice, and the mournfullest self-possession in his manner. "I took care before I left the boy, that he should get at nothing which could do him any injury. He is locked up, and will remain locked up, because—"

"I say, Thorpe! won't you let him off this time?" interrupted Mr. Goodworth, boldly plunging head foremost, with his petition for mercy, into the conversation.

"If you had allowed me to proceed, sir," said Mr. Thorpe, who always called his father-in-law *sir*, "I should have simply remarked that, after having enlarged to my son (in such terms, you will observe, as I thought best fitted to his comprehension) on the disgrace to his parents and himself of his behavior this morning, I set him a task three verses to learn out of the 'Select Bible Texts for Children:' choosing the verses which seemed, if I may trust my own judgment on the point, the sort of verses to impress on him what his behavior



ought to be for the future in church. He flatly refused to learn what I told him. It was, of course, quite impossible to allow my authority to be set at defiance by my own child (whose disobedient disposition has always, God knows, been a source of constant trouble and anxiety to me), so I locked him up, and locked up he will remain until he has obeyed me. My dear," (turning to his wife and handing her a key), "I have no objection, if you wish, to your going and trying what *you* can do toward overcoming the obstinacy of this unhappy child."

Mrs. Thorpe took the key, and went upstairs immediately—went up to do what all women have done, from the time of the first mother; to do what Eve did when Cain was wayward in his infancy, and cried at her breast—in short, went up to coax her child.

Mr. Thorpe, when his wife closed the door, carefully looked down the open page on his knee for the place where he had left off—found it—referred back a moment to the last lines of the preceding leaf—and then went on with his book, not taking the smallest notice of Mr. Goodworth.

"Thorpe!" cried the old gentleman, plunging head foremost again, into his son-in-law's reading this time instead of his talk, "You may say what you please; but your notion of bringing up Zack is—is, I'm certain, a wrong one altogether."

With the calmest imaginable expression of face, Mr. Thorpe looked up from his book; and, first carefully putting a paper-knife between the leaves, placed it on the table. He then crossed one of his legs over the other, rested an elbow on each arm of his chair, and clasped his hands in front of him. On the wall opposite hung several lithographed portraits of distinguished preachers, in and out of the Establishment—mostly represented as very sturdily-constructed men with bristly hair, fronting the spectator interrogatively and holding thick books in their hands. Upon one of these portraits—the name of the original of which was stated at the foot of the print to be the Reverend Aaron Yollop—Mr. Thorpe now fixed his eyes, with a faint approach to a smile on his face (he never was known to laugh), and with a look and manner which said as plainly as if he had spoken it: "This old man is about to say something improper or absurd to me; but he is my wife's father; it is my duty to bear with him, and therefore I am perfectly resigned."

"It's no use looking in that way, Thorpe," growled the old gentleman; "I'm not to be put down by looks at my time of life. I may have my own opinions I suppose, like other people; and I don't see why I shouldn't speak them, especially when they relate to my own daughter's boy. It's very

queer of me, I dare say, but I think I ought to have a voice now and then in Zack's bringing up."

Mr. Thorpe bowed respectfully—partly to Mr. Goodworth, partly to the Reverend Aaron Yollop. "I shall always be happy, sir, to listen to any expression of your—"

"My opinion's this," burst out Mr. Goodworth, "You've no business to take Zack to church at all, till he's some years older than he is now. I don't deny that there may be a few children, here and there, at six years old, who are so very patient, and so very—(what's the word for a child that knows a lot more than he has any business to know at his age? Stop! I've got it!—*precocious*—that's the word)—so very patient and so very precocious that they'll sit quiet in the same place for two hours, making believe all the time that they understand every word of the service, whether they really do or not. I don't deny that there may be such children, though I never met with them myself, and should think them all nasty little hypocrites if I did! But Zack isn't one of that set: Zack's a regular natural, genuine, trump of a child (God bless him!) Zack—"

"Do I understand you, my dear sir," interposed Mr. Thorpe, sorrowfully sarcastic, "to be praising the conduct of my son in disturbing the congregation, and obliging me to take him out of the church?"

"Nothing of the sort," retorted the old gentleman; "I'm not praising Zack's conduct, but I *am* blaming yours. Here it is in plain words: *You* keep on cramming church down his throat; and *he* keeps on puking at it as if it was physic, because he don't know any better, and can't know any better at his age. Is that the way to make him take kindly to religious teaching? I know as well as you do, that he fidgeted and roared like a young Turk at the sermon. And pray what was the subject of the sermon? Justification by faith. Do you mean to tell me that he, or any other child at his time of life, could understand anything of such a subject as that, or get an atom of good out of it? You can't—you know you can't? So, I say again, it's no use taking him to church yet; and what's more, it's worse than no use, for it's only associating his first ideas of religious instruction with everything in the way of restraint and discipline and punishment that can be most irksome to him. There! that's my opinion, and I should rather like to hear what you've got to say against it?"

"Latitudinarianism," said Mr. Thorpe, looking and speaking straight at the portrait of the Reverend Aaron Yollop.

"You can't fob me off with long words, which I don't understand, and which I don't believe you can find in Johnson's Dictionary," continued Mr. Goodworth dog-

gedly. "You would do much better to take my advice, and let Zack go to church, for the present, at his mother's knees. Let his Morning Service be about ten minutes long; let your wife tell him out of the New Testament, about our Saviour's goodness and gentleness to little children; and then, let her teach him, from the Sermon on the Mount, to be loving and truthful and forbearing and forgiving, for our Saviour's sake. If such precepts as those are enforced—as they may be in one way or another—by examples drawn from his own daily life; from people around him, from what he meets with and notices and asks about, out of doors and in—mark my words, he'll take kindly to his religious instruction; he'll understand it; he'll often come and ask for it of his own accord, as a reward for being a good boy. I've seen that in other children: I've seen it in my own children, who were all brought up so. Of course, you don't agree with me! Of course you've got your own objection all ready to bowl me down with?"

"Rationalism," said Mr. Thorpe, still looking steadily at the lithographed portrait as if he only desired to bowl Mr. Goodworth down under the immediate clerical auspices of the Reverend Aaron Yollop.

"Well! your objection's a short one this time at any rate; and that's a blessing," said the old gentleman rather irritably. "Rationalism—eh? I understand that *ism*, I rather suspect, better than the other. It means in plain English, that you think I'm wrong in only wanting to give religious instruction the same chance with Zack which you let all other kinds of instruction have—the chance of becoming useful by being first made attractive. You can't get him to learn to read by telling him that it will improve his mind—but you can by getting him to look at a picture-book. You can't get him to drink senna and salts by reasoning with him about it's doing him good—but you can by promising him a lump of sugar to take after it. You admit this sort of principle so far, because you're obliged; but the moment anybody wants (in a spirit of perfect reverence and desire to do good) to extend it to higher things, you purse up your lips, shake your head, and talk about Rationalism—as if that was an answer! Well! well! it's no use talking—go your own way—I wash my hands of the business altogether. But now I am at it, I'll just say this one thing more before I've done: your way of punishing the boy for his behavior in church is, in my opinion, about as bad and dangerous a one—not to mince matters—as could possibly be devised. Why not give him a thrashing? if you *must* punish the miserable little urchin severely for what's his misfortune as much as his fault. Why not stop his pudding, or

something of that sort? Here you are as sociating verses in the Bible, in his mind, with the idea of punishment and being locked up in the cold. You may make him get his texts by heart I dare say, by fairly tiring him out; but I tell you what I'm afraid you'll make him learn too, if you don't mind—you'll make him learn to dislike the Bible as much as other boys dislike the birch-rod!"

"Sir," cried Mr. Thorpe, turning suddenly round, and severely confronting Mr. Goodworth, "once for all, I must most respectfully insist on being spared for the future any open profanities in conversation, even from your lips. All my regard and affection for you, as Mrs. Thorpe's father, shall not prevent me from solemnly recording my abhorrence of such awful infidelity as I believe to be involved in the words you have just spoken! My religious convictions recoil—"

"Stop, sir!" said Mr. Goodworth, seriously and sternly. Mr. Thorpe obeyed at once. The old gentleman's manner was generally much more remarkable for heartiness than for dignity; but it altered completely while he now spoke. As he struck his hand on the table, and rose from his chair, there was something in his look which it was not safe to disregard. "Mr. Thorpe," he went on, more calmly, but very decidedly, "I refrain from telling you what my opinion is of the 'respect' and 'affection' which have allowed *you* to rebuke *me* in such terms as you have chosen. I merely desire to say that I shall never need a second reproof of the same kind at your hands; for I shall never again speak to you on the subject of my grandson's education. If, in consideration of this assurance, you will now permit me, in my turn—not to rebuke—but to offer you temperately one word of advice, I would just recommend you not to be too ready in future, lightly and cruelly to accuse a man of infidelity because his religious opinions happen to differ on some subjects from yours. To infer a serious motive for your opponent's convictions, however wrong you may think them, can do *you* no harm; to infer a scoffing motive can do *him* no good. We will say nothing more about this, if you please. Let us shake hands; and never again revive a subject which we disagree too widely about ever to discuss with advantage."

At this moment the servant came in with lunch. Mr. Goodworth poured himself out a glass of sherry, made a remark on the weather, and soon resumed his cheerful everyday manner. But he did not forget the pledge that he had given to Mr. Thorpe. From that time forth, he never by word or deed interfered again in his grandson's education.



While the theory of Mr. Thorpe's system of juvenile instruction was being discussed in the free air of the parlor, the practical working of that theory, so far as regarded the individual case of Master Zack, was being exemplified in anything but a satisfactory and encouraging manner, in the prison-region of the dressing-room.

While she ascended the first flight of stairs, Mrs. Thorpe's ears informed her that her son was firing off one uninterrupted volley of kicks against the door of his place of confinement. As this was by no means an unusual circumstance, whenever the boy happened to be locked up for bad behavior, she felt distressed, but not at all surprised at what she heard; and went into the drawing-room, on her way up stairs, to deposit her Bible and Prayerbook (kept in a morocco case, with gold clasps) on the little side-table, upon which they were always placed during week-days. Possibly, she was so much agitated, that her hand trembled; possibly, she was in too great a hurry; possibly, the household imp, who rules the brittle destinies of domestic glass and china, had marked her out as his destroying angel for that day; but however it was, in placing the morocco case on the table, she knocked down and broke an ornament standing near it: a little ivory model of a church steeple in the florid style, enshrined in a glass case. Picking up the fragments, and mourning over the catastrophe, occupied some little time, more than she was aware of, before she at last left the drawing-room, to proceed on her way to the upper regions.

As she laid her hand on the bannisters, it struck her suddenly and significantly, that the noises in the dressing-room above had entirely ceased.

The instant she satisfied herself of this, her maternal imagination, uninfluenced by what Mr. Thorpe had said below stairs, conjured up an appalling vision of Zack before his father's looking-glass, with his chin well lathered, and a bare razor at his naked throat. The child had indeed a singular aptitude for amusing himself with purely adult occupations. Having once been incautiously taken into church by his nurse, to see a female friend of hers married, Zack had, the very next day, insisted on solemnizing the nuptial ceremony from recollection, before a bride and bridegroom of his own age, selected from his playfellows in the garden of the square; his performance on that occasion, being a thing to be remembered, related, and giggled over, by every maid-servant who had been present at it, for the special benefit of every marriageable follower who had not. Another time, when the gardener had incautiously left his lighted pipe on a bench, while he went to gather a flower for one

of the local nursery-mails, whom he was accustomed to favor horticulturally in this way, Zack contrived, undetected, to take three greedy whiffs of pigtail in close succession: was discovered reeling about the grass like a little drunkard, and had to be smuggled home (deadly pale, and bathed in cold perspiration) to recover, out of his mother's sight, in the deep retirement and congenial gloom of the back kitchen. Although the precise infantine achievements here cited were unknown to Mrs. Thorpe, there were plenty more, like them, which she had discovered; and the warning remembrance of which now hurried the poor lady up the second flight of stairs in a state of breathless agitation and alarm.

Zack, however, had not got at the razors; for they were all locked up, as Mr. Thorpe had declared. But he had, nevertheless, discovered in the dressing-room a means of perpetrating mighty domestic mischief, which his father had never thought of providing against. Finding that kicking, screaming, stamping, sobbing, and knocking down chairs, were quite powerless as methods of enforcing his liberation, the young gentleman suddenly suspended his proceedings; looked all round the room; observed the cock which supplied his father's bath with water; and instantly resolved to flood the house. He had set the water going in the bath, had filled it to the brim, and was anxiously waiting, perched up on a chair, to see it overflow—when his mother unlocked the dressing-room door, and entered the room.

"Oh you naughty, wicked, shocking child!" cried Mrs. Thorpe, horrified at what she beheld, but instantly stopping the threatened deluge from motives of precaution connected with the drawing-room ceiling. "Oh, Zack! Zack! what *will* you do next? What *would* your papa say if he heard of this? You wicked, wicked, wicked child, I'm ashamed to look at you!"

And, in very truth, Zack offered at that moment a sufficiently disheartening spectacle for a mother's eyes to dwell on. There stood the young imp, sturdy and upright on his chair, wriggling his shoulders in and out of his frock, and holding his hands behind him in unconscious imitation of the favorite action of Napoleon the Great. His light hair was all rumpled down over his forehead; his lips were swelled; his nose was red; and from his bright blue eyes rebellion looked out frankly mischievous, amid a surrounding halo of dirt and tears, rubbed circular by Lis knuckles. After gazing on her son in mute despair for a minute or so, Mrs. Thorpe took the only course that was immediately open to her—or, in other words, took the child off the chair.

"Have you learnt your lesson, you wicked boy?" she asked.

"No, I hav'n't," answered Zack, resolutely.

"Then come to the table with me: your papa's waiting to hear you. Come here and learn your lesson directly," said Mrs. Thorpe, leading the way to the table.

"No, I won't," rejoined Zack, emphasizing the refusal by laying tight hold of the wet sides of the bath with both hands.

It was lucky for this rebel of six years old, that he addressed those three words to his mother only. If his nurse had heard them, she would instantly have employed that old-established resource in all educational difficulties, familiarly known to persons of her condition under the appellation of "a smack on the head;" if Mr. Thorpe had heard them, the boy would have been sternly torn away, bound to the back of the chair, and placed ignominiously with his chin against the table; if Mr. Goodworth had heard them, the probability is that he would instantly have lost his temper, and soused his grandson head over ears in the bath. Not one of these ideas occurred to Mrs. Thorpe, who possessed no ideas. But she had certain substitutes which were infinitely more useful in the present emergency: she had instincts.

"Look up at me, Zack," she said, returning to the bath, and sitting in the chair by its side; "I want to say something to you."

The boy obeyed directly; he was never averse, in his worst moods, to looking everybody straight in the face. His mother opened her lips, stopped suddenly, said a few words, stopped again, hesitated, and then ended her first sentence of admonition in the most ridiculous manner, by snatching at the nearest towel, and bearing Zack off to the wash-hand basin.

The plain fact was, that Mrs. Thorpe was secretly vain of her child. She had long since, poor woman, forced down the strong strait-waistcoats of prudery and restraint over every other moral weakness but this—of all vanities the most beautiful; of all human failings surely the most pure! Yes! she was proud of Zack! The dear, naughty, handsome, church-disturbing, door-kicking, house-flooding Zack! If he had only been a plain-featured boy, she could have gone on sternly with her admonition: but to look coolly on his handsome face, made ugly by dirt, tears, and rumpled hair; to speak to him in that state, while soap, water, brush, and towel, were all within reach, was more than the mother (or the woman either, for that matter) had the self-denial to do! So, before it had well begun, the maternal lecture ended abruptly and impotently in the wash-hand basin.

When the boy had been smartened and brushed up (he submitted very patiently to

the cleaning operation), Mrs. Thorpe took him on her lap; and, suppressing a strong desire to kiss him on both his round, shining cheeks, said these words:

"I want you to learn your lesson, because you will please *me* by obeying your papa. I have always been kind to *you*—now I want you to be kind to *me*."

For the first time, Zack hung down his head, and seemed unprepared with an answer. Mrs. Thorpe knew by experience what this symptom meant. "I think you are beginning to be sorry for what you have done, and are going to be a good boy;" she said. "If you are, I know you will give me a kiss." Zack hesitated again—then suddenly reached up, and gave his mother a hearty and loud-sounding kiss on the tip of her chin. "And now you will learn your lesson?" continued Mrs. Thorpe. "I have always tried to make *you* happy, and I am sure you are ready, by this time, to try and make *me* happy—are you not, Zack?"

"Yes, I am," said Zack manfully. His mother took him at once to the table, on which the "Select Bible Texts for Children" lay open, and tried to lift him into a chair. "No!" said the boy, resisting and shaking his head resolutely; "I want to learn my lesson on your lap."

Mrs. Thorpe humored him immediately. She was not a handsome, not even a pretty woman; and the cold atmosphere of the dressing-room by no means improved her personal appearance. But, notwithstanding this, she looked absolutely attractive and interesting at the present moment, as she sat with Zack in her arms, bending over him while he studied his three verses in the "Bible Texts." Women who have been ill-used by nature have this great advantage over men in the same predicament—wherever there is a child present, they have a means ready at hand, which they can all employ alike, for hiding their personal deficiencies. Who ever saw an awkward woman look awkward with a baby in her arms? Who ever saw an ugly woman look ugly when she was kissing a child?

Zack, who was a remarkably quick boy when he chose to exert himself, got his lesson by heart in so short a time that his mother insisted on hearing him twice over, before she could satisfy herself that he was really perfect enough to appear in his father's presence. The second trial decided her doubts, and she took him in triumph down stairs.

Mr. Thorpe was reading intently, Mr. Goodworth was thinking profoundly, the rain was falling inveterately, the fog was thickening dirtily; and the austerity of the severe-looking parlor was hardening apace into its most adamant Sunday grimness, as Master Zack was brought to say his les-



son at his father's knees. He got through it perfectly again; but his childish manner, during this third trial, altered from frankness to distrustfulness; and he looked much oftener, while he said his task, at Mr. Goodworth than at his father. When the texts had been repeated, Mr. Thorpe just said to his wife, before resuming his book: "You may tell the nurse, my dear, to get Zachary's dinner ready for him—though he doesn't deserve it for behaving so badly about learning his lesson."

"Please, grandpapa, may I look at the picture-book you brought for me last night, after I was in bed?" said Zack, addressing Mr. Goodworth, and evidently feeling that he was entitled to his reward now he had suffered his punishment.

"Certainly not on Sunday," interposed Mr. Thorpe; "your grandpapa's book is not a book for Sundays."

Mr. Goodworth started, and seemed about to speak; but recollecting what he had said to Mr. Thorpe, contented himself with poking the fire. The book in question was a certain romance, entitled "Jack and the Bean Stalk," copiously adorned with illustrations of thrilling interest, tinted in the freest style of water-color art.

"If you want to look at picture-books, you know what books you may have to-day; and your mamma will get them for you when she comes in again," continued Mr. Thorpe.

The works now referred to were an old copy of the "Pilgrim's Progress" containing four small prints of the period of the last century; and a "Life of Moses," illustrated by severe German outlines in the manner of the modern school. Zack knew well enough what books his father meant, and exhibited his appreciation of them by again beginning to wriggle his shoulders in and out of his frock. He had evidently had more than enough already of the "Pilgrim's Progress" and the "Life of Moses."

Mr. Thorpe said nothing more, and returned to his reading. Mr. Goodworth put his hands in his pockets, yawned disconsolately, and looked, with a languidly satirical expression in his eyes, to see what his grandson would do next. If the thought passing through the old gentleman's mind at that moment had been put into words, it would have been exactly expressed in the following sentence: "Oh, you miserable little boy! When I was your age, how I should have kicked at all this!"

Zack was not long in finding a new resource. He spied Mr. Goodworth's Malacca cane standing in a corner; and, instantly getting astride of it, prepared to amuse himself with a little imaginary horse-exercise up and down the room. He had just started at a gentle canter, when his

father called out, "Zachary!" and brought the boy to a stand-still directly.

"Put back the stick where you took it from," said Mr. Thorpe; "you mustn't do that on Sunday. If you want to move about, you can walk up and down the room."

Zack paused, debating for an instant whether he should disobey or burst out crying.

"Put back the stick!" repeated Mr. Thorpe.

Zack remembered the dressing-room and the "Select Bible Text for Children," and wisely obeyed. He was by this time completely crushed down into as rigid a state of Sunday discipline as his father could desire. After depositing the stick in the corner, he slowly walked up to Mr. Goodworth, with a comical expression of amazement and disgust in his chubby face; and meekly laid down his head on his grandfather's knee.

"Never say die, Zack!" said the kind old gentleman, rising and taking the boy in his arms. "While nurse is getting your dinner ready, let's look out of window, and see if it is going to clear up."

Mr. Thorpe raised his head from his book for a moment but said nothing this time.

"Ah, rain! rain! rain!" muttered Mr. Goodworth, staring desperately out at the miserable prospect, while Zack amused himself by rubbing his nose vacantly backward and forward against a pane of glass, appearing exceedingly inclined to go to sleep during the operation—"Rain! rain! Nothing but rain and fog in November. Hold up, Zack! Ding-dong, ding-dong, there go the bells for afternoon church! Oh, Lord! I wonder whether it will be fine to-morrow? Think of the pudding, my boy!" whispered the old gentleman with a benevolent remembrance of what a topic of consolation that thought had often afforded to him, when he was a child himself.

"Yes," said Zack, acknowledging the pudding suggestion, but evidently declining to profit by it. "And, please, when I've had my dinner, will somebody put me to bed?"

"Put you to bed!" exclaimed Mr. Goodworth. "Why, bless the boy! what's come to him now? You used always to be wanting to stop up."

"I want to go to bed, and get to to-morrow, and have my picture-book," was the weary and whimpering answer.

"I'll be hanged," soliloquized the old gentleman under his breath, "if I don't think I want to go to bed too, and get to to-morrow, and have my 'Times' at breakfast! I'm as bad as Zack, every bit!"

"Grandpapa," continued the child, more

wearily than before, "I want to whisper something in your ear."

Mr. Goodworth bent down a little. Zack looked round cunningly toward his father—then, putting his mouth close to his grandfather's ear, confidentially communicated the conclusion at which he had arrived, after the events of the day, in these words—

*"I say, grandpapa, I hate Sunday!"*

## BOOK I.

### THE HIDING.

#### CHAPTER I.

##### A NEW NEIGHBORHOOD.

AT the period when the episode just related occurred in the life of Mr. Zachary Thorpe the younger—that is to say, in the year 1837—Baregrove square was the farthest square from the city, and the nearest to the country, of any then existing in the northwestern suburb of London. But, by the time fourteen years more had elapsed—that is to say, in the year 1851—Baregrove square had lost its distinctive character altogether: other squares had filched from it those last remnants of healthy rustic flavor from which its good name had been derived; other streets, crescents, rows, and villa-residences had forced themselves pitilessly between the old suburb and the country, and had suspended for ever the once neighborly relations between the pavement of Baregrove square and the pathways of the pleasant fields.

Alexander's armies were great makers of conquests; and Napoleon's armies were great makers of conquests; but the modern guerilla regiments of the hod, the trowel, and the brick-kiln, are the greatest conquerors of all; for they hold the longest the soil that they have once possessed. How mighty the devastation which follows in the wake of these tremendous aggressors, as they march through the kingdom of nature, triumphantly bricklaying beauty wherever they go! What dismantled castle, with the enemy's flag flying over its crumbling walls, ever looked so utterly forlorn as a poor field-fortress of nature, imprisoned on all sides by the walled camp of the enemy, and degraded by a hostile banner of pole and board, with the conqueror's device inscribed on it—"THIS GROUND TO BE LET ON BUILDING LEASES?" What is the historical spectacle of Marius sitting among the ruins of Carthage, but a trumpery theatrical set-scene, compared to the sublimely

mournful modern sight of the last tree left standing, on the last few feet of grass left growing, amid the greenly-festering stucco of a finished Paradise row, or the naked scaffolding poles of a half-completed Prospect place? Oh, gritty-natured guerilla regiments of the hod, the trowel, and the brick-kiln! the town-pilgrim of nature, when he wanders out at fall of day into the domains which you have spared yet for a little while, hears strange things said of you in secret, as he duteously interprets the old, primeval language of the leaves; as he listens to the imperilled trees, still whispering mournfully around him the last dying notes of their ancient even-song!

But alas! what avails the voice of lamentation? What new neighborhood ever stopped on its way into the country, to hearken to the passive remonstrance of the fields, or to bow before the indignation of outraged admirers of the picturesque? Never was suburb more impervious to any faint influences of this sort, than that especial suburb which grew up between Baregrove square and the country; removing a walk among the hedge-rows a mile off from the resident families, with a ruthless rapidity at which sufferers on all sides stared aghast. First stories were built, and mortgaged by the enterprising proprietors, to get money enough to go on with the second; old speculators failed and were succeeded by new; foundations sank from bad digging; walls were blown down in high winds from hasty building; bricks were called for in such quantities, and seized on in such hot haste, half-baked from the kilns, that they set the carts on fire, and had to be cooled in pails of water before they could be erected into walls; and still the new suburb defied all accidents, and would go on, and did go on, in spite of everything, until it was actually an accomplished fact—a little town of houses, ready to be let and lived in, more or less, from the one end to the other.

The new neighborhood offered house-accommodation, accepted at the higher prices as yet only to a small extent, to three distinct subdivisions of the great middle class of our British population. Rents and premises were adapted, in a steeply descending scale, to the means of the middle classes with large incomes, of the middle classes with moderate incomes, and of the middle classes with small incomes. The abodes for the large incomes were called "mansions;" and were in a manner fortified strongly against the rest of the suburb by being all built in one wide row, shut in at either end by ornamental gates, and called a "park." Stucco, plastered over a framework wrought in the domestic-classical style of architecture, pervaded these buildings; flights of steps and Corinthian porticoes, carriage-gates, and carriage-drives up



to the door, conservatories on one side, and coach-houses on the other, publicly asserted their right to be called "mansions" in the strictest and most opulent sense of the word. The unspeakable desolation of aspect common to the whole suburb, was in a high state of finish and perfection in this part of it. Irreverent street noises faded dead away on the threshold of the ornamental gates, at the sight of the hermit lodge-keeper. The cry of the costermonger, and the screech of the vagabond London boy, were banished out of hearing. Even the regular tradesman's time-honored business noises at customers' doors, seemed as if they ought to have been relinquished here. The frantic falsetto of the milkman, the crash of the wildly-careering butcher's cart over the never-to-be pulverized stones of the new road through the "park," always sounded profanely to the passing stranger, in the spick-and-span stillness of this paradise of the large incomes.

It was a curious result of the particular arrangement adopted in planting the new colony, that it connected the large incomes and the small by a certain bond of union, which had assuredly never entered the imagination of the builders. As the rich neighborhood was shut *in* from the general suburb, so the poor neighborhood was shut *out* from it; the one serving in its way, as completely as the other, to keep the numerous habitations for the moderate incomes exclusively in their proper places; jammed in, locally as well as socially, between the lofty and the lowly extremes of life around them.

The hapless small incomes had the very worst end of the whole locality entirely to themselves, and absorbed all the noises and nuisances, just as the large incomes absorbed all the tranquillities and luxuries of suburban existence. Here were the dreary limits at which architectural invention stopped in despair. Each house in this poor man's purgatory was indeed, and in awful literalness, a brick box with a slate top to it. Every hole drilled in these boxes, whether door-hole or window-hole, was always overflowing with children. They often mustered by forties and fifties in one street, and were the great pervading feature of the quarter. In the world of the large incomes, young life sprang up like a garden fountain, artificially playing only at stated periods in the sunshine. In the world of the small incomes, young life flowed out turbulently into the street, like an exhaustless kennel-deluge, in all weathers. Next to the children of the inhabitants, in visible numerical importance, came the shirts and petticoats, and miscellaneous linen of the inhabitants; fluttering out to dry publicly on certain days of the week, and enlivening the treeless little gardens where they hung, with light-

some avenues of pinafores, and solemn-spreading foliage of stout Welsh flannel. Here, that absorbing passion for oranges (especially active when the fruit is half ripe, and the weather is bitter cold), which distinguishes the city English girl of the lower orders, flourished in its finest development; and here also the poisonous fumes of the holyday shop-boy's bad cigar told all resident nostrils when it was Sunday, as plainly as the church-bells could tell it to all resident ears. The one permanent and remarkable rarity in this neighborhood, on week days, was to discover a male inhabitant in any part of it, between the hours of nine in the morning, and six in the evening; the one sorrowful sight which never varied, was to see that every woman, even to the youngest, looked more or less unhappy, often care-stricken, while youth was still in the first bud; oftener child-stricken before maturity was yet in the full bloom.

As for the great central portion of the suburb, running out irregularly between the poor boundary on the one side, and the rich boundary on the other, until it actually reached the fields—as for the locality of the moderate incomes, it reflected exactly the lives of those who inhabited it, by presenting no distinctive character of its own at all.

In one part, the better order of houses imitated as pompously as they could the architectural grandeur of the mansions owned by the large incomes; in another, the worst order of houses respectably, but narrowly, escaped a general resemblance to the brick boxes of the small incomes. So, again, what the neighborhood gained in dismal repose at one end, from such overflowsings of superfluous "park" stillness as exuded through the ornamental gates, it lost at the other, from exposure to such volatile particles of noise and nuisance as floated free of the densely-vulgar atmosphere generated in the poor quarter. In some places, the "park" influences vindicated their existence superbly in the persons of isolated ladies who, not having a carriage to go out in for an airing, exhibited the next best thing, a footman to walk behind them: and so got a pedestrian airing genteelly in that way. In other places, the obtrusive spirit of the brick boxes rode about, thinly disguised, in children's carriages, drawn by nursery-maids; or fluttered aloft, delicately discernible at angles of view, in the shape of a lace pocket-handkerchief, or a fine-worked chemisette, or other article of ornamental linen, driving modestly at home in retired corners of back gardens. Generally, however, the hostile influences of the large incomes and the small, mingled together on the neutral ground of the moderate incomes: turning it into the dullest, the dreariest, the most oppressively conventional, and most

intensely (because negatively) depressing division of the whole suburb. It was just that sort of place where the thoughtful man, looking about him mournfully at the locality, and physiologically observing the inhabitants, would be prone to stop suddenly, and ask himself one plain, but terrible question: "Do these people ever manage to get any real enjoyment out of their lives, from one year's end to another?"

To the looker-on at the system of life prevailing among the moderate incomes in England, the sort of existence which, with certain pleasant exceptions, that system embodies, seems in some aspects to be without a parallel in any other part of the civilized world. In what other country out ours is social enjoyment among the middle classes with small means, deliberately denuded of all genuine substance of its own, for the sake of making it the faint reflection of social enjoyment among the higher classes with large means? Is this done anywhere else but in England? And is it not obviously true—melancholy truth!—that, while the upper classes and the lower classes of our society have each their own characteristic and genuine recreations for leisure hours, adapted equally to their means and to their tastes, the middle classes, in general, have (to expose the sad reality) nothing of the sort?

Life in the new suburb afforded proofs in plenty of this; as life does, indeed, everywhere else in England for the most part. To take an example from those eating and drinking recreations which absorb so large a portion of existence:—If the rich proprietors of the "mansions" in the "park," could give their grand dinners and be as prodigal as they pleased with their first-rate champagne, and their rare gastronomic delicacies; the poor tenants of the brick boxes could just as easily enjoy their tea-garden conversazione, and be just as happily and hospitably prodigal, in turn, with their porter-pot, their tea-pot, their plates of bread-and-butter, and their dishes of shrimps. On either side, these representatives of two pecuniary extremes in society, looking for what recreations they wanted with their own eyes, pursued those recreations within their own limits, and enjoyed themselves unreservedly in consequence. Not so with the moderate incomes: they, in their social moments, shrank absurdly far from the poor people's porter and shrimps; crawled contemptibly near to the rich people's rare wines and luxurious dishes; exposed their poverty in imitation by chemical champagne from second-rate wine merchants, by flabby salads and fetid oyster-patties from second-rate pastry-cooks; were, in no one of their festive arrangements, true to their incomes, to their order, or to themselves; and there-

fore, never thoroughly enjoyed any hospitalities of their own affording—never really had any "*pleasure*," whatever their notes of invitation might say to the contrary, in receiving their friends.

Now, on the outskirts of that part of the new suburb appropriated to the middle classes with moderate incomes, there lived a gentleman (by name Mr. Valentine Blyth, and by profession a painter) whose life offered, in more respects than one, a very strange and striking contrast to the lives of most of his neighbors—rotten with social false pretences, as they generally were, to the very core. On first taking up his abode in the new neighborhood, Mr. Blyth quite unconsciously directed on himself all the surplus attention which older settlers in the colony had to spare for local novelties, by building a large and quaintly-designed painting-room at the side of his house, and so destroying the general uniformity of appearance in the very uniform row of buildings amid which he had chosen his dwelling-place. From that moment, people began, as the phrase went, to talk about him. Some of the idler inhabitants made inquiries among the tradespeople, and curiously watched the painter and his household at available opportunities, both at home and abroad. The general opinion which soon proceeded from these inquiries and watchings was, that Mr. Blyth must be a very eccentric person; that he did all sorts of things which it was "not usual to do;" and that he presumed to enjoy himself in his own way, without the slightest reference to the manners and customs of the rich aristocracy planted in the neighboring seclusion of the "park" gates.

Having arrived at these conclusions, and having thereupon unanimously decided that Mr. Blyth was anything rather than a gentlemanly person, the neighbors would probably have thought little more about the new-comer, but for one peculiar circumstance connected with him, which really made a deeper impression on all inquisitive minds than every one of his eccentricities put together.

It was more than suspected that some impenetrable mystery lurked hidden in the privacy of the painter's fireside.

That Mr. Blyth was a married man, had been pretty clearly ascertained. That his wife was identical with a certain invalid lady, who had been carried into the new house wrapped up in many shawls, and had never afterward appeared either at door or window, was a presumption very firmly established. So far, though there might be no absolute certainty, there was also no positive doubt that could fairly connect itself with the painter's household.

But the invalid was no' the only female member of Mr. Blyth's domestic circle.



There was also a young lady, who lived in his house, and who constantly accompanied him in his daily walks. She was reported to be a most ravishingly beautiful creature—and yet, no one could ever be met with who had seen her face plainly; for the simple reason that she invariably and provocingly wore her veil down whenever she went abroad. It grew to be generally asserted and believed that Mr. Blyth had never told anybody who she really was; and Calumnious Gossip, starting with this rumor, soon got wonderfully and mischievously busy with her character, especially among servants and tradespeople. It was surmised in some directions, that she was the artist's natural child—in others, that she stood toward him in the relation of a resident female model, or perhaps of something more scandalously improper still. And it was further whispered about everywhere, that let her be who she might, she was most indubitably the victim of a very terrible misfortune. People shook their heads, and sighed, and murmured, "Poor thing!" or assumed airs of inquisitive commiseration, and said, "Sad case, isn't it?" whenever they spoke of her in the general society of the suburb.

Did this young lady deserve to excite other emotions besides contempt or pity? Did the painter really merit such unqualified condemnation as he received for not virtuously coming forward to suppress all scandalous reports about her, by giving a full, true, and particular account of who she really was? These were questions which the inhabitants of the suburb were all unable to answer definitely, and for one good reason:—they had never so much as approached the gates of discovery, not one of them having crossed the mysterious threshold of Mr. Valentine Blyth's new painting-room.

## CHAPTER II.

### THE STUDIO.

It is wintry weather; not such a November winter's day, however, as some of us may remember looking at fourteen years ago, in Baregrove square, but a brisk frosty morning in January. The country view visible from the back-windows of Mr. Blyth's house, which stands on the extreme limit of the new suburb, is thinly and brightly dressed out for the sun's morning levée, in its finest raiment of pure snow. The cold blue sky is cloudless; every sound out of doors falls on the ear with a hearty and jocund ring; all newly-lit fires burn up brightly and willingly without coaxing; the robin-redbreasts are bolder and tamer than

ever this morning, and hop about expectantly on balconies and window-sills, as if they only waited for an invitation to walk in and warm themselves, along with their larger fellow-creatures round the kindly hearth.

Patty the housemaid has just kindled a glorious blaze, using logs of wood and lumps of coal together, in the grate of Mr. Blyth's painting-room. She stands warming herself before the fire, and staring about her, with reverential ignorance, at the different objects of art by which she is encompassed on all sides.

There happens to be another individual of the fair sex in the painting-room, to keep Patty company, who merits some special notice, as rather a remarkable character. This lady stares like the housemaid, but suffers apparently from a severe attack of crick in the neck, and always gazes immovably in the same direction. By some extraordinary caprice of nature, her head is turned right round on her body, so that her face actually looks over her back instead of over her bosom. She is of average height, and not too fleshy; and wears, over false curls, a fisherman's red cap, surmounted by a cavalier's hat of the period of Charles the First, with a broken feather in it. One of her arms is stiffly extended in an action of impressive gesticulation; the other hangs at her side, apparently turned inside out. The flesh on these limbs is of a light and tawny brown color. Her only dress is a toga of blue merino, very old, very dirty, and very ragged; but tied under one arm and over the other, in the most strictly classical fashion. The peculiar position of her head renders her happily unconscious that this garment has fallen open in front, so as to render her lower extremities visible in a very improper manner. Looking merely at her plump and shapely legs (which, by-the-by, are just of the same odd color as her arms), any spectator experienced in such matters would infer, from their position alone, that the lady was extremely drunk, and ought never to have been admitted into the house of any respectable man. When to all this is added the fact, vouched for by competent witnesses, that the extraordinary female here described has stood in her present staggering and immodest attitude for the last *ten days*, without moving an inch one way or the other; to say nothing of her having seriously startled every visitor unaccustomed to such apparitions who has entered the painting-room, ever since her first establishment there; all unprejudiced judges must agree that the household of Mr. Blyth (so far as regarded this inmate at least), was fairly open to the animadversions of every respectable inhabitant throughout the whole suburb.

The immovably improper lady—let all English women be comforted as they read it—was a foreigner. She was of French origin; had a silk skin, a stuffed interior, and wooden joints, was distantly related to the ignoble family of the Mannikins, and bore the barbarous name of Lay Figure. Her business was to sit to Mr. Blyth, wearing any dresses he wanted to paint from. She was disliked instinctively by both cook and housemaid, and will always be found to exhibit herself in the light of a permanently bad character through the course of the present narrative.

"Drat the thing!" says Patty, spitefully pulling the lady's toga into its proper place on leaving the painting room, "drat the thing! it's always showing its nasty silk legs, whatever you put on 'em. If master *must* have you, you great beastly doll, why don't he give you a petticoat? But nothing's what it ought to be here; I never see such an untidy place in all my life!"

Patty was right. Pictorial chaos reigned supreme in the new studio.

It was a large and lofty room, lighted by a skylight, and running along the side of the house throughout its whole depth. The walls were covered with plain brown paper, the floor was only carpeted in the middle; the furniture might have been fairly valued by any broker who looked over it, at the worth of twenty pounds. In each of the four corners broad wooden shelves were fixed, on which all sorts of objects great and small were crowded in compact masses, without the slightest attempt at order or arrangement. Plaster casts mustered strong in all varieties on these shelves; and were set together anyhow, with the most whimsical disregard of the persons, positions, and periods, which they represented.

Thus, in one corner, Doctor Johnson appeared to be gazing down, steadfastly libertine, upon the bosom of the Venus de Medici; who, in her turn, looked boldly across the lexicographer's nose at Napoleon Bonaparte. In another corner, the Fighting Gladiator straddled over Eve at the Fountain to assault the good-humored features of Sir Walter Scott. Dusty little vials of oil and varnish, gallipots, bundles of old brushes, bits of painting-rag, lumps of whiting, dry knobs of sponge, tattered books, tangled balls of string, hard putty, an old hour-glass, broken hyacinth bottles, filled up, with dozens of similar items, the interstices between the casts, and connected the removal of any one thing that was wanted from the shelves, with the inevitable catastrophe of knocking down eight or ten other things that were not.

Frameless pictures in every stage of incompleteness, sketches of all sizes, and prints ancient and modern, decorated the walls in just as hap-hazard a way as the

casts decorated the shelves. The pictures hung awry, for the most part by single strings depending from nails dotted about at various elevations. The sketches and prints were knocked up anyhow with tacks, in any places where there was room for them.

The larger works of art comprised, of course, representations of an Italian peasant woman decorated for a festa; of a brown complexioned patriarch with a large white beard; of a rocky landscape with steam and cascade; of a picturesque beggar-boy, grinning and holding out his hand (not finished) for a half-penny; of a female head looking up, and of a dog's head looking down. Also, there were two small copies from Rubens, and one large copy from Titian; there was a print from Raphael, a print from Hogarth, a print from Teniers, among the dozens of engravings stuck against the walls. Over the fireplace hung a rusty breastplate, a dagger, and a piece of mediæval plate; and all round the skirting-board, at irregular intervals, were placed piles of dirty old canvases, three or four deep, with their faces turned to the wall.

Immediately over the chimney-piece, the blank space was covered closely and crookedly with writing in white, black, and red chalk. Addresses of new models, and appointments with old models, short quotations from the poets, memoranda of evening engagements and of domestic necessities, painting recipes, and hasty personal sentiments on art, were the subjects principally treated of on the curious substitute for a pocket diary used by Mr. Blyth. Perused at hazard in a horizontal direction, no matter whether high or low, any one line of the half-illegible writing above the chimney-piece would be found to read something in this way:—

"Daniel Sulsh, athletic model with beard, 5, Cranberry Court, High Holborn."—"Amelia Bibby, to sit for the Genius of Discovery in my 'Columbus,' at 10, Wednesday."—"How happy is the blameless vestal's lot! Pope."—"Melpomene Society's Conversazione, 8 o'clock, Friday."—"Order ginger-beer, and get hair cut."—"Try copal thinned with turpentine; paint next sky with linseed-oil, and don't forget that verdigris is a bad color to stand."—"I consider Michael Angelo the most glorious creature that ever lived.—V. Blyth."

The most striking articles of furniture in the studio were two large easels placed at either extremity of the room; each supporting a picture of considerable size, covered over for the present with a pair of sheets which looked woefully in want of washing. There was a painting-stand with quantities of shallow little drawers, some too full to open, others again too full to shut: there was a moveable platform to put



sitters on, covered with red cloth much disguised in dust; there was a small square table of new deal, and a large round table of dilapidated rosewood, both laden with sketch-books, portfolios, dog's-eared sheets of drawing-paper, tin-pots, scattered brushes, palette-knives, rags variously defiled by paint and oil, pencils, chalks, port-crayons—the whole smelling powerfully at all points of turpentine.

Finally, there were chairs in plenty, no one of which, however, at all resembled the other. In one corner, stood a mouldy antique chair with a high back, and a basin of dirty water on the seat. By the side of the fireplace a cheap straw chair of the beehive pattern was tilted over against a dining-room chair, with a horsehair cushion. Before the largest of the two pictures, and hard by a portable flight of steps, stood a rickety office-stool. On the platform for sitters a modern easy chair, with the cover in tatters, invited all models to picturesque repose. Close to the rosewood table was placed a rocking-chair, and between the legs of the deal table were huddled together a camp-stool and a hassock. In short, every remarkable variety of the illustrious family of Seats was represented in one corner or another of Mr. Blyth's painting-room.

All the surplus small articles which shelves, tables, and chairs, were unable to accommodate, reposed in comfortable confusion on the floor. One half at least of a pack of cards seemed to be scattered about in this way. A shirt-collar, three gloves, a boot, a shoe, and half a slipper; a silk stocking, and a pair of worsted muffetees; three old play-bills rolled into a ball; a pencil-case, a paper-knife, a tooth powder-box without a lid, and a superannuated black beetle trap turned bottom upward, assisted in forming part of the heterogeneous collection of rubbish strewn about the studio floor. And worse than all—as tending to show that the painter absolutely enjoyed his own disorderly habits—Mr. Blyth had jocosely desecrated his art, by making it imitate litter where, in all conscience, there was real litter enough already. Just in the way of anybody entering the room, he had painted, on the bare floor, exact representations of a new quill pen and a very expensive looking sable brush, lying all ready to be trodden upon by entering feet. Fresh visitors constantly attested the skillfulness of these imitations by involuntarily stooping to pick up the illusive pen and brush; Mr. Blyth always enjoying the discomfiture and astonishment of every new victim, as thoroughly as if the practical joke had been a perfectly new one on each successive occasion.

Such was the interior condition of the painting-room, after the owner had inhabited it for a period of little more than two months!

The church-clock of the suburb has just struck ten, when quick light steps approach the studio door. A gentleman enters—trips gayly over the imitative pen and brush—and, walking up to the fire, begins to warm his back at it, looking about him rather absently, and whistling “Drops of Brandy” in the minor key. This gentleman is Mr. Valentine Blyth.

He looks under forty, but is really a little over fifty. His face is round and rosy, and not marked by a single wrinkle in any part of it. He has large sparkling black eyes; wears neither whiskers, beard, nor mustache; keeps his thick curly black hair rather too closely cut; and has a briskly comical kindness of expression in his face, which it is not easy to contemplate for the first time without smiling at him. He is tall and stout, always wears very tight trowsers, and generally keeps his wristbands turned up over the cuffs of his coat. All his movements are quick and fidgety. He appears to walk principally on his toes; and seems always on the point of beginning to dance, or jump, or run, whenever he moves about, either in or out of doors. When he speaks he has an odd habit of ducking his head suddenly, and looking at the person whom he addresses over his shoulder. These, and other little personal peculiarities of a like nature, all contribute to make him exactly that sort of man whom everybody shakes hands with, and nobody bows to, on a first introduction.

Men instinctively choose him to be the recipient of a joke, girls to be the male confidant of all flirtations which they like to talk about, children to be their petitioner for the pardon of a fault, or the reward of a half-holiday. On the other hand, he is decidedly unpopular among that large class of Englishmen, whose only topics of conversation are public nuisances and political abuses; for he resolutely looks at everything on the bright side, and can not even be made to understand the difference between a liberal conservative and a moderate whig! Men of business habits think him a fool; intellectual women with independent views cite him triumphantly as a capital specimen of the inferior male sex. And, in truth, apart from his art (in which he can not fairly be said to excel) he certainly would appear to have no particular mission in life—except to figure in poor painters' subscription lists; to be blessed inveterately by street beggars; and to be followed home at night by every stray dog who may happen to meet with him.

## CHAPTER III.

MR. VALENTINE BLYTH.

MR. BLYTH's history, though offering nothing very extraordinary as a whole, is, nevertheless, in some of its aspects, rather a remarkable one.

In the first place, neither his father, nor his mother, nor any relation of theirs, on either side, had ever practised the art of painting, or had ever derived any special pleasure from the contemplation of pictures. They were all respectable commercial people of the steady fund-holding old school, who lived exclusively within their own circle; and had never so much as spoken to a live artist or author in the whole course of their lives. The city-world in which Valentine's boyhood was passed, was as destitute of art influences of any kind as if it had been situated on the coast of Greenland; and yet, to the astonishment of everybody, the lad was always drawing and painting in his own rude way, at every leisure hour—was always longing to get into the academy schools—and was always firm in his determination to be a painter, whenever his future prospects were talked over round the family fireside.

Old Mr. Blyth was, as might be expected, seriously disappointed and amazed at the strange direction taken by his son's inclinations. No one (including Valentine himself) could ever trace them back to any recognizable source; but every one could observe plainly enough that they grew resolutely with the boy's growth, and that there was no hope of successfully opposing them by fair means of any kind. Seeing this, the old gentleman, like a wise man, at last made a virtue of necessity; and, giving way to his son, entered him, under strong commercial protest, as a student in the schools of the Royal Academy.

Here Valentine remained, working industriously, until his twenty-first birthday. On that occasion, old Mr. Blyth had a little serious talk with him about his prospects in life. In the course of this conversation, the young man was informed that a rich merchant uncle was ready to take him into partnership; and that his father was equally ready to start him in business with his whole share, as one of three children, in the comfortable inheritance acquired for the family by the head of the well-known city house of Blyth and Company. If Valentine consented to this arrangement, his fortune was secured, and he might ride in his carriage before he was thirty. If, on the other hand, he still persisted in becoming a painter, his father, being convinced that the pursuit of art offered the most uncertain of all resources, would exceedingly lament the choice he had made; but would not on that

account absolutely oppose it: and would never, whatever happened, refer to it disparagingly on any future occasion.

Having said thus much, the generous old gentleman added, that if his son really chose to fling away a fortune, he should not be pinched for means to carry on his studies. The interest of the inheritance to come to him on his father's death should be paid quarterly to him during his father's lifetime: the annual independence thus secured to the young painter, under any circumstances, being calculated as amounting to a little over four hundred pounds a year.

Valentine was not deficient in gratitude. He thanked his father with tears in his eyes; took a day to consider what he should do, though his mind was quite made up about his choice beforehand; and then, as the reader has anticipated, persisted in his first determination; throwing away the present certainty of becoming a wealthy man, for the sake of the future chance of turning out a great painter.

If he had really possessed genius, there would have been nothing very remarkable in this part of his history, so far; but, having nothing of the kind, holding not the smallest spark of the great creative fire in his whole mental composition, surely there was something extraordinary and unaccountable, something very discouraging to contemplate, in the spectacle of a man resolutely determining, in spite of adverse home circumstances and strong home temptations, to abandon all those paths in life, along which he might have walked fairly abreast with his fellows, for the one other path in which he was predestined by Nature to be always left behind by the way. Do the announcing angels, whose mission it is to whisper of greatness to great spirits, ever catch the infection of fallibility from their intercourse with mortals? Do the voices which said truly to Shakspeare, to Raphael, and to Mozart, in their youth-time, "You are chosen to be gods in this world," ever speak wrongly to souls which they are not ordained to approach? It may be so. There are men enough in all countries whose lives would seem to prove it—whose deaths have not contradicted it.

But even to victims such as these, sacrificed as they are to a delusion which seems, on first sight, to be the most fatal offspring of all mortal fallibilities, there are pleasant resting-places on the thorny way, and flashes of sunlight now and then, to make the cloudy prospect beautiful, though only for a little while. It is not all misfortune and disappointment to the man who is mentally unworthy of a great intellectual vocation, so long as he is morally worthy of it; so long as he can pursue it honestly, patiently, and affectionately, for its own dear sake. Let him work, though ever so obscurely



in this spirit toward his labor: and he shall find the labor itself its own exceeding great reward. In that reward lives the divine consolation, ever gentle and ever true, which, though Fame turn her back on him contemptuously, and Affluence pass over unpitying to the other side of the way, shall still pour oil upon all wounds, and take him quietly and tenderly to the hard journey's end. To this one exhaustless solace, which the work, no matter of what degree, can yield always to earnest workers, the man who has succeeded, and the man who has failed, can turn alike, as to a common mother; the one, for refuge from envy, from hatred, from misrepresentation, from all the sorest evils which even the thriving child of fame is heir to; the other, from neglect, from disappointment, from ridicule, from all the petty tyrannies which the pining bondman of obscurity is fated to undergo.

Thus it was with Valentine. He had sacrificed a fortune to his art; and his art—in the world's eye at least—had given to him nothing in return. Yet, for all that, he could not have loved it more dearly, worked at it more hopefully, believed in it more proudly and faithfully, if the Royal Academy had chosen him for president, and the queen had tapped him on the shoulder with a sword and said, "Rise, Sir Valentine Blyth."

He was certainly placed far out of the reach of poverty by his four hundred pounds a year; and was consequently spared all those last, bitterest miseries, which might sooner or later have overwhelmed any other man, less fortunately circumstanced, who occupied his humble position in the art. But this very good fortune of Mr. Blyth's was counterpoised by an accompanying disadvantage which hung long and oppressively on the opposite side of the scale. Friends and relatives who had not scrupled, on being made acquainted with his choice of a vocation, to call it in question, and thereby to commit that worst and most universal of all human impertinences, which consists in telling a man to his face, by the plainest possible inference, that others are better able than he is himself to judge what calling in life is fittest and worthiest for him; friends and relatives who thus upbraided Valentine for his refusal to accept the partnership in his uncle's house, affected, on discovering that he made no public progress whatever in art, to believe that he was simply an idle fellow, who knew that his father's liberality placed him beyond the necessity of working for his bread; and who had taken up the pursuit of painting as a mere amateur amusement to occupy his leisure hours. To a man who labored like poor Blyth, with the steadiest industry and the highest aspirations, such whispered

calumnies as these were all mortifications the most cruel, of all earthly insults the hardest to bear.

Still he worked on patiently, never losing faith or hope, because he never lost the love of his art, or the enjoyment of pursuing it, irrespective of results however disheartening. Like most other men of his slight intellectual calibre, the works he produced were various, if nothing else. He tried the florid style, and the severe style; he was by turns devotional, allegorical, historical, sentimental, humorous. At one time, he abandoned figure-painting altogether, and took to landscape; now producing conventional studies from nature—and now, again, revelling in poetical compositions, which might have hung undetected in many a collection as doubtful specimens of Berghem, or Claude.

But whatever department of the art Valentine tried to excel in, the same unhappy destiny seemed always in reserve for each completed effort. For years and years, his pictures pleaded hard for admission at the academy doors; and were invariably (and not unfairly, it must be confessed) refused even the worst places on the walls of the exhibition rooms. Season after season he still bravely struggled on, never depressed, never hopeless while he was before his easel, until at last the day of reward—how long and painfully wrought for—actually arrived. A small picture of a very insignificant subject—being only a kitchen "interior," with a sleek cat on a dresser, stealing milk from the tea-tray during the servant's absence—was benevolently marked "doubtful" by the hanging committee; was thereupon kept in reserve, in case it might happen to fit any forgotten place near the floor—did fit such a place—and was really hung up, as Mr. Blyth's little unit of a contribution to the one thousand and odd works exhibited to the public, that year, by the Royal Academy.

But Valentine's triumph did not end here. His picture of the treacherous cat stealing the household milk—entitled, by way of appealing jocosely to the strong Protestant interest, "The Jesuit in the Family"—was really sold to an Art-Union prize-holder. This enlightened patron of the fine arts was a publican. He had drawn ten pounds out of the great lottery; and being economically determined to have the largest work he could buy for his money, went about with a carpenter's rule in his hand, measuring all the ten-pound pictures for sale. "The Jesuit in the Family" was a prodigious bargain in this point of view, so the Art-Union Mæcenas patronized and purchased it accordingly.

Once furnished with a ten-pound note won by his own brush, Valentine, from that time forth gayly set all disparaging

opinions and all impudently-advising friends at defiance. He indulged in the most extravagant anticipations of future celebrity and future wealth; and proved, recklessly enough, that he believed as firmly as any other visionary in the wildest dreams of his own imagination, by marrying, and setting up quite a grand establishment, on the strength of the brilliant success which had been achieved by "The Jesuit in the Family."

He had been for some time past engaged to the lady, who had now become Mrs. Valentine Blyth. She was the youngest of eight sisters, who formed part of the family of a poor engraver, and who, in the absence of any mere money qualifications, were all rich alike in the ownership of most magnificent Christian names. Mrs. Blyth was called Lavinia-Ada; and hers was by far the humblest name to be found among the whole sisterhood. Valentine's relations all objected strongly to this match, not only on account of the bride's property, but for another and a very serious reason, which events soon proved to be but too well founded.

Lavinia had suffered long and severely, as a child, from a bad spinal malady. Constant attention, and such medical assistance as her father could afford to employ, had, it was said, successfully combated the disorder; and the girl grew up, prettier than any of her sisters, and apparently almost as strong as the healthiest of them. Old Mr. Blyth, however, on hearing that his son was now just as determined to become a married man, as he had formerly been to become a painter, thought it advisable to make certain inquiries about the young lady's constitution; and addressed them, with characteristic caution, to the family doctor, at a private interview.

The result of this conference was far from being satisfactory. The doctor was suspiciously careful not to commit himself: he said that he *hoped* the spine was no longer in danger of being affected; but that he could not conscientiously express himself as feeling quite sure about it. Having repeated these discouraging words to his son, old Mr. Blyth delicately and considerately, but very plainly, asked Valentine, whether, after what he had heard, he still honestly thought that he would be consulting his own happiness, or the lady's happiness either, by marrying her at all? or, at least, by marrying her at a time when the doctor could not venture to say, that the poor girl might not be even yet in danger of becoming an invalid for life?

Valentine, as usual, persisted at first in looking exclusively at the bright side of the question; and made light of the doctor's authority accordingly. But being pressed by his father to view the matter in its worst,

as well as in its best aspects, he answered resolutely that, whatever happened, he was determined to perform his promise to Lavinia, at the time which they had already appointed for their marriage.

"Lavvie and I love each other dearly," said Valentine with a little trembling in his voice, but with perfect firmness of manner. "I hope in God that what you seem to fear will never happen; but even if it should, I shall never repent having married her, for I know that I am just as ready to be her nurse as to be her husband. I am willing to take her in sickness and in health, as the Prayer-Book says. In my home she would have such constant attention paid to her wants and comforts, as she could not have at her father's, with his large family and his poverty, poor fellow! And this is reason enough, I think, for my marrying her, even if the worst should take place. But I always have hoped for the best, as you know, father: and I mean to go on hoping for poor Lavvie, just the same as ever!"

What could old Mr. Blyth, what could any man of heart and honor, oppose to such an answer as this? Nothing. The marriage took place; and Valentine's father tried hard, and not altogether vainly, to feel as sanguine about future results as Valentine himself.

For several months—how short the time seemed, when they looked back on it in after-years!—the happiness of the painter and his wife more than fulfilled the brightest hopes which they had formed as lovers. As for the doctor's cautious words, they were hardly remembered now; or, if recalled, were recalled only to be laughed over. But the time of tears, and bitter grief, which had been appointed, though they knew it not, came inexorably, even while they were still lightly jesting at all medical authority round the painter's fire-side. Lavinia caught a bad cold. The cold turned to rheumatism, to fever, then to general debility, then to nervous attacks—each one of these disorders, being really but so many false appearances, under which the horrible spinal malady was treacherously and slowly advancing in disguise.

When the first positive symptoms appeared, old Mr. Blyth acted with all his accustomed generosity toward his son. "My purse is yours, Valentine," said he; "open it when you like; and let Lavinia, while there is a chance for her, have the same advice and the same remedies as if she was the greatest duchess in the land." The old man's affectionate advice was affectionately followed. The most renowned doctors in England prescribed for Lavinia; everything that science and incessant attention could do, was done; but the terrible disease still baffled remedy after remedy.



advancing surely and irresistibly, until at last the doctors themselves lost all hope. So far as human science could foretell events, Mrs. Blyth, in the opinion of all her medical advisers, was doomed for the rest of her life never to rise again from the bed on which she lay; except perhaps to be sometimes moved to the sofa, or, in the event of some favorable reaction, to be wheeled about occasionally in an invalid chair.

What the shock of this intelligence was, both to husband and wife, no one ever knew; they nobly kept it a secret even from each other. Mrs. Blyth was the first to recover courage and calmness. She begged, as an especial favor, that Valentine would seek consolation, where she knew he must find it sooner or later, by going back to his studio, and resuming his old familiar labors, which had been suspended from the time when her illness had originally declared itself.

On the first day when, in obedience to her wishes, he sat before his picture again—the half-finished picture from which he had been separated for so many months—on that first day, when the friendly occupation of his life seemed suddenly to have grown strange to him; when his brush wandered idly among the colors, when his tears dropped fast on the palette every time he looked down on it, when he tried hard to work as usual, though only for half an hour, only on simple background places in the composition; and still the brush made false touches, and still the tints would not mingle as they should, and still the same words, repeated over and over again, would burst from his lips: “Oh, poor Lavvie! oh, poor, dear, dear Lavvie!”—even then, the spirit of that, beloved art, which he had always followed so humbly and so faithfully, was true to its divine mission, and comforted and upheld him at the last bitterest moment, when he laid down his palette in despair.

While he was still hiding his face before the very picture which he and his wife had once innocently and secretly glorified together, in those happy days of its beginning that were never to come again, the sudden thought of consolation revived his heart, and showed him how he might adorn all his after-life with the deathless beauty of a pure and noble purpose. Thenceforth, his vague dreams of fame, and of rich men wrangling with each other for the possession of his pictures, took the second place in his mind; and, in their stead, sprang up the new resolution that he would win independently, with his own brush, no matter at what sacrifice of pride and ambition, the means of surrounding his sick wife with all those luxuries and refinements which his own little income did not enable him to obtain, and which he shrank with instinctive

delicacy from accepting as presents bestowed by his father's generosity. Here was the consoling purpose which robbed affliction of half its bitterness already, and bound him and his art together by a bond more sacred than any that had united them before. In the very hour when this thought came to him, he rose without a pang to turn the great historical composition, from which he has once hoped so much, with its face to the wall, and set himself to finish an unpretending little “Study” of a cottage courtyard, which he was certain of selling to a picture-dealing friend. The first approach to happiness which he had known for a long, long time past, was on the evening of that day, when he went up-stairs to sit with Lavinia; and, keeping secret his purpose of the morning, made the sick woman smile in spite of her sufferings, by asking her how she should like to have her room furnished, if she were the lady of a great lord, instead of being only the wife of Mr. Valentine Blyth.

Then came the happy day when the secret was revealed, and afterward the pleasant years when poor Mrs. Blyth's, most splendid visions of aristocratic luxury were all gradually realized through her husband's exertions in his profession. But for his wife's influence, Valentine would have been in danger of abandoning high art and classical landscape altogether, for cheap portrait-painting, cheap copying, and cheap studies of still life. But Mrs. Blyth, bedridden as she was, contrived to preserve all her old influence over the labors of the studio; and would ask for nothing new, and receive nothing new, in her room, except on condition that her husband was to paint at least one picture of high art every year, for the sake (as she proudly said) of “asserting his intellect and his reputation in the eyes of the public.” Accordingly, Mr. Blyth's time was pretty equally divided between the production of great unsaleable “compositions,” which were always hung near the ceiling in the Exhibition, and of small marketable commodities, which were as invariably hung near the floor.

Valentine's average earnings from his art, though humble enough in amount, amply sufficed to fulfil the affectionate purpose for which, to the last farthing, they were rigorously set aside. “Lavvie's Drawing-room” (this was Mr. Blyth's name for his wife's bedroom) really looked as bright and beautiful as any royal chamber in the universe. The rarest flowers, the prettiest gardens under glass, bowls with gold and silver fish in them, a small aviary of birds, an Æolian harp to put on the window-sill in summer-time, some of Valentine's best drawings from the old masters, prettily framed proof-impressions of engravings done by Mrs. Blyth's father, curtains and hang-

ings of the tenderest color and texture, inlaid tables, and delicately-carved book-cases, were among the different objects of refinement and beauty which, in the course of years, Mr. Blyth's industry had enabled him to accumulate for his wife's pleasure. No one but himself ever knew what he had sacrificed in laboring to gain these things. The heartless people whose portraits he had painted, and whose impertinences he had patiently submitted to; the stingy bargain-ers who had treated him like a low tradesman; the dastardly men of business who had disgraced their order by taking mean advantage of his simplicity; how hardly and cruelly such insect natures of this world had often dealt with that noble heart! how despicably they had planted their small gad-fly stings in the great soul which it was never permitted to them to subdue!

No! not once to subdue, not once to tarnish! All petty humiliations were forgotten in one look at "Lavvie's Drawing-room;" all stain of insolent words vanished from Valentine's memory in the atmosphere of the studio. Never was a more superficial judgment pronounced than when his friends said that he had thrown away his whole life, because he had chosen a vocation in which he could win no public success. Short-sighted observers! they could look at the subject only within this one narrow range of vision; they failed altogether to see what his choice had won for him, in place of that success which they worshipped as if it comprised the alpha and omega of merit in itself.

The lad's earliest instincts had indeed led him truly, after all. The art to which he had devoted himself was the only earthly pursuit that could harmonize as perfectly with all the eccentricities as with all the graces of his character, that could mingle happily with every joy, tenderly with every grief belonging to the quiet, simple, and innocent life, which, employ him anyhow, it was in his original nature to lead. But for this protecting art, under what prin disguises, amid what foggy social climates of class conventionality, would the worlds clerical, legal, mercantile, military, naval, or dandy, have extinguished this man, if any one of them had caught him in its snares! Where would then have been his frolicsome enthusiasm that nothing could dispirit, his inveterate oddities of thought, speech, and action, which made all his friends laugh at him and bless him in the same breath; his affections, so manly in their firmness, so womanly in their tenderness, so childlike in their frank fearless confidence, that dreaded neither ridicule on the one side, nor deception on the other? Where and how would all these characteristics have vanished, but for his art—but for the abiding spirit, ever present to preserve

their vital warmth against the outer and earthy cold? The wisest of Valentine's friends, who shook their heads disparagingly whenever his name was mentioned, were at least wise enough in *their* generation never to ask themselves such embarrassing questions as these.

## CHAPTER IV.

### THE PAINTER AND HIS PALATE.

WHILE we have been looking over his past life—now past for many years—Mr. Blyth has moved away from the studio fire-place, and is about to begin work for the day.

Still whistling, he walks toward an earthen pipkin half-full of water, placed in one corner of the painting-room, and takes from it a little china palette, which looks absurdly small as a ministering agent to the progress of the two large pictures on the high and sturdy easels. He has indolently left on this palette the whole of yesterday's paint. The water, however, has prevented it from hardening, and has therefore rendered it easy of removal by the palette-knife. Looking round the room for some waste paper to wipe off the brimstone-and-treacle-colored compound which the first sweep of his blade has scraped up, Mr. Blyth's eyes happen to light first on the painting-table, and on four or five notes which lie scattered over it.

These, he thinks, will suit his purpose as well as anything else, so he takes up the notes, but, before making use of them, reads their contents over for the second time—partly by way of caution, partly through a dawdling habit, which men of his absent disposition are always too ready to contract. Three of these letters happen to be in the same scrambling, blotted hand-writing. They are none of them very long, and are the production of a former acquaintance of the reader's, who has somewhat altered in height and personal appearance during the course of the last fourteen years. Here is the first of the notes which Valentine is now reading:—

"Dear Blyth: It's all over with me. The governor says theatres are the devil's houses, and I must be home by eleven o'clock. I'm sure I never did anything wrong at a theatre, which I might not have done just the same anywhere else; unless laughing over a good play is one of the *national sins* he's always talking about. But I'll be hanged if I can stand it much longer, even for my mother's sake! You are my only friend. I shall come and see you to-morrow, so mind and be at home. How I wish I was an artist! Yours ever

"Z. THORPE, JR."



Shaking his head and smiling at the same time Mr. Blyth finishes this letter—drops a perfect puddle of dirty paint and turpentine in the middle, over the words “national sins,” throws the paper into the fire—and goes on to note number two:—

“Dear Blyth: I couldn’t come yesterday, because of another row, and my mother crying about it, of course. You remember the old row, when I was at school, about Teddy Millichap and me smoking cigars, and how my pocket-money was stopped, and I pawned my new silver watch, and was near being expelled because it wasn’t gentlemanlike? Well, this is just the same sort of row over again. The governor said he smelt tobacco-smoke at morning prayers. It was my coat, which I forgot to air at the fire the night before; and he found it out, and said he wouldn’t have me smoke, because it led to dissipation, and I told him (which is true) that lots of parsons smoked. There was such a row! I wish you visited at our house, and could come and say a word on my side; for I am perfectly wretched, and have had all my cigars taken away from me. Yours truly,

“Z. THORPE, JR.”

“Catch me going near your vinegar-cruet of a father, Mister Zack!” says Valentine to himself, making a wry face while he deposits a moist lump of “lamp-black,” streaked with “lemon-yellow,” upon the fair white paper of the second note—tossing it into the fire afterward, as if it were viciously burning his fingers by anticipation.

A third note is required before the palette can be scraped clean. Mr. Blyth reads the contents rather gravely on this occasion; rapidly plastering his last morsels of waste-paint upon the paper as he goes on, until at length it looks as if it had been thoroughly peppered with all the colors of the rainbow.

Zack’s third letter of complaint certainly promised serious domestic tribulation for the ruling power at Baregrove square:—

“Dear Blyth: I have been bullied by my father, and coaxed by my mother; and the end of it is, that I have given in, at least for the present. I told the governor about my wanting to be an artist, and about your saying that I had a good notion of drawing, and an eye for a likeness; but I might just as well have talked to one of your easels. He said the profession was a dangerous one”—(“And I say it isn’t,” muttered Mr. Blyth to himself)—“and led to all sorts of profligacy;” (“It doesn’t!” said Valentine, indignantly spotting the paper with Prussian blue)—“and that artists in general led very debauched lives.” (“That’s a vile lie!” cried Mr. Blyth, poking the top of his palette-knife clean through the note in a rage.) “I denied it all,

of course, point-blank;” (“Well done, Zack!”) “and was savagely rowed for my pains.” (“Never mind that, you spoke the truth!”) “It ended, as I said before, in my giving in on mother’s account. And here I have been, for the last three weeks, at a tea-broker’s office in the city in consequence. The governor and his friends say it’s a good opening for me, and talk about the respectability of commercial pursuits. I don’t want to be respectable, and I hate commercial pursuits. What the deuce is the good of forcing me into a merchant’s office, when I can’t say my multiplication table? Ask my mother about that: she’ll tell you! Only fancy me going round tea-warehouses in filthy Jewish places like St. Mary-Axe, to take samples, with a blue bag to carry them about in; and a dirty junior clerk who wears Blucher boots and cleans his pen in his hair, to teach me how to fold up parcels! Isn’t it enough to make a fellow’s blood boil to think of it? I can’t go on, and I won’t go on in this way! Mind you’re at home to-morrow; I’m coming to speak to you about how I’m to begin learning to be an artist. The junior clerk is going to do all my sampling work for me in the morning; and we are to meet in the afternoon, after I have come away from you, at a chop-house; and then go back to the office as if we had been together all day, just as usual. Don’t be afraid of its being discovered. I can bribe the ink-haired little devil with the Bluchers to the strictest secrecy, by treating him to juicy steaks and treacly porter. Ever yours,

“Z. THORPE, JR.”

“P. S.—My mind’s made up: if the worst comes to the worst, I shall bolt from home.”

“Oh, dear me! O dear! dear me!” says Valentine, mournfully rubbing his palette clean with a bit of rag. “What will it all end in, I wonder? Old Thorpe’s going just the way, with his obstinate severity, to drive Zack to something desperate. If my own dear, kind father had had the management of him, what a different boy he would have been! Coming here to-morrow, he says?” continued Mr. Blyth, taking up a tin tube, and dreamily squeezing white paint out of it, which dropped slowly on his palette in little worm-like folds. “Coming to-morrow! He never dates his notes; but I suppose, as this one came last night, he means to-day. I don’t know how to advise him for the best, I’m sure—he’s such a queer, flighty fellow. Confound the Vandyck brown; I’m always losing that particular color. Where can it have got to!”

Not finding the Vandyck brown, Mr. Blyth goes on to the next available pigment, which he can extricate from the disordered interior of his painting-box—then stops again to hunt for another lost tube of

color; the top of which, when he finds it, won't come off, and the bottom of which bursts in his hand, letting the paint out on his fingers instead of his palette. Having repaired this disaster, Valentine, before proceeding further with his preparations for the day's work, determines to refresh himself by a look at one of his pictures. He throws the sheet off the smallest of the two, and discloses a classical landscape.

The chief aim of the muses who preside over classic art—whether it be ancient or modern, whether it take the form of poetry, painting, or music—seems to be to preserve their artificial dignity as goddesses, by banishing their natural charms as women; to live even with their professed admirers on the most stately and formal terms; and to keep the world at large thoroughly well away from them by improving, informing, and attracting as few people as possible by any recognisably useful, truthful, or graceful means. When, for example, the muse who presides over the classic drama, condescends to appeal icily to us from afar off, and writes a play, she selects a suicide—say Cato—for hero. She keeps him incessantly engaged in talking patriotism and philosophy; represents him as always moving about uncomfortably in halls, porticoes, senate-houses, and squares; and never lets us hear a word from his lips of any of the universal human subjects which the poor wretch must have talked about, when he ate his bit of classical dinner, when he dawdled out into the forum on idle days to hear the news, or when he started off constitutionally for a brisk Roman walk.

And, again, when the classic muse resolves to paint a picture of the pastoral hilarity of primeval times, is it not always her principle to make men and women as unlike human nature as possible? Her happy female revellers must always exhibit an incredibly ugly straight profile line from the top of the forehead to the tip of the nose; and must generally be made to express ecstasy by hopping on one leg—apparently in a hurricane, judging by the frightful manner in which their petticoats and hair are blown about them on these occasions. And as for the jovial male companions of the ladies, are they not always monsters with tawny red skins, mottled outrageously with lumps of knotty muscle? Are they not continually more or less drunk? continually more or less beastly and ridiculous in their antics? Must we believe such representations to be poetically suggestive of life among the simple inhabitants of a young world? Of course we must: for it is the classic muse who has done them!

Or, lastly, when this same classic muse appeals to our ears, and writes a symphony, what immense pains she takes in that, as

in other things, to avoid being popularly and immediately pleasing! She combines all her instruments in a general conspiracy against one weakly little atom of a tune (frequently not her own property), which is always trying to make itself heard, and always being bellowed down sternly for its pains; until, at last, assailed by screeching fiddles, shouting horns, grunting double basses, and treacherously-mellifluous flutes, it expires, faintly piping, in a storm of furious fugue, after a gallant but vain struggle for existence which has lasted for more than half an hour.

Now, in regard to the landscape development of classic art, if Mr. Blyth had done nothing else, he had at least achieved the great end of reminding nobody of anything simple, familiar, or pleasing to them in nature. In the foreground were the three lanky ruined columns, the dancing Bacchantes, the musing philosopher, the mahogany-colored vegetation, and the bosky and branchless trees, with which we have all been familiar, from our youth upward, "classical compositions." Down the middle of the scene ran that wonderful river, which is always rippling with the same regular waves; and always bearing onward the same capsizable galleys, with the same vermilion and blue revellers striking lyres on the deck. On the bank where there was most room for it, appeared our old, old friend, the architectural city, which nobody could possibly live in; and which is composed of nothing but temples, towers, monuments, flights of steps, and bewildering rows of pillars. In the distance, our favorite blue mountains were as blue and as peaky as ever, on Valentine's canvass; and our generally-approved pale yellow sun was still disfigured by the same attack of aerial jaundice, from which he has suffered ever since classical compositions first forbade him to take refuge from the sight behind a friendly cloud.

Before this picture, which is very nearly finished, Mr. Blyth stands rapt in approving contemplation; now dropping his head a little on one side, and now on the other; now retreating backward to take in the general effect; now advancing again, and isolating bit after bit of the scene, by holding two of his fingers before other bits, so as to enjoy it successively in separate parts. He has put two fingers over the philosopher, to see how the Bacchantes look without him, when a shrill and impatient mewing, outside the studio door, attracts his attention.

"Bless my soul!" says Valentine (who has an inveterate habit of talking to himself), "there's 'Snooks' wanting to come in! She was only confined last night. I wonder what the servants will say to her getting back into the painting-room already?"



Mr. Blyth opens the door while he is speaking; and a small black cat, with white toes, a melancholy-looking white muzzle, and a kitten in her mouth, enters methodically—walks straight up to the fireplace—deposits her kitten on the rug—and, lying down beside it, instantly begins to purr as loud as she possibly can.

"Why, you little wretch!" says Mr. Blyth, poking "Snooks" gently behind the ear with the padded end of that light cane which artists rest against their pictures to steady the hand while painting, and which is technically termed a mahl-stick.—"Why you little wretch! when are you going to leave off kittening? Let me see: you're not a very old cat yet; you've have six litters of four at a time (four times six are twenty-four) and five litters of three at a time. Three times five's fifteen, and ten's twenty-five, and four—no, and ten—or, stop, two tens, twenty; and four—no, fifteen—well, at any rate, it *must* be forty; of course it must be forty, though I can't exactly make it out. Oh Snooks! Snooks! you would have been the mother of a family of forty children, by this time, if we hadn't taken to drowning them!"

Puss, thus apostrophized, rolls luxuriously over on her back; elevates her four white toes in the air; and looks up, indolently impudent, with half-closed green eyes, at Mr. Blyth. No account of that gentleman's household could possibly pretend to be complete, if it did not include the cat. She was literally a member of the family. She lived with them, ate with them, followed them about the house like a dog, performed all sorts of tricks under Mr. Blyth's direction, and was on perfectly friendly terms with the whole circle of his acquaintance. She had been first derisively called "Snooks" by Mr. Zachary Thorpe, junior, which designation had been immediately adopted by Valentine, who said he highly approved of a short, familiar English name, for a small, familiar English animal. Mrs. Blyth, inheriting her father's fondness for fine names, suggested that the cat had better be called "Zerlina," but was outvoted by everybody, and puss became the comic "Snooks," instead of the sentimental "Zerlina," of the family, from that moment.

After playing with the cat for a minute or two longer, Valentine resumes the business of preparing his palette.

As the bee comes and goes irregularly from flower to flower; as the butterfly flutters in a zig-zag course from one sunny place on the garden wall to another; or, as an old woman runs from wrong omnibus to wrong omnibus, at the Elephant and Castle, before she can discover the right one; as a countryman blunders up one street, and down another, before he can find the way to his place of destination in London—so

does Mr. Blyth now come and go, flutter, run, and blunder, in a mighty hurry about his studio, in search of missing colors which ought to be in his painting-box, but which are not to be found there. While he is still hunting through the room for the Vandycck brown, his legs come into collision with a large drawing-board, which, like everything else, is put in the wrong place.

"Oh, my shins!" cries Valentine, gently rubbing the affected parts. "Oh, my Vandycck brown! where on earth can it be? Stop a minute, though! I declare I forgot about the Venus."

The drawing-board, on which there is blank sheet of paper stretched, seems to have reminded Mr. Blyth of some duty connected with it. He places it against two chairs, in a good light; then moves the portable steps up to one of the shelves with the casts on it, and removes the Venus de Medici from under the eyes of Doctor Johnson; knocking down, the moment he lifts her away, a lump of putty, a ball of string, and a number of old brushes. He then carries Venus's head and shoulders to the office stool, which he had previously moved opposite the two chairs and the drawing-board. Having completed these preparations, and reviewed them critically with his head a little on one side, he goes back to the painting-box, and is just searching again among the tubes of color, when the door of the studio opens, and a young lady enters.

She is dressed in very pretty, simple, quaker-like attire. Her gown is of a light-gray color, covered by a neat little black apron in front, and fastening round the throat over a frill collar. The sleeves of this dress are worn tight to the arm, and are terminated at the wrists by quaint-looking cuffs of antique lace, the only ornamental morsels of costume which she has on. It is impossible to describe how deliciously soft, bright, fresh, pure, and delicate this young lady is, merely as an object to look at, contrasted with the dingy disorder of the studio-sphere through which she now moves. The keenest observers, beholding her as she at present appears, would detect nothing in her face or figure, her manner or her costume, in the slightest degree suggestive of impenetrable mystery, or incurable misfortune. And yet, she happens to be the very person at whom prying glances are directed, whenever she walks out; whose very existence is referred to by the neighbors with an invariable accompaniment of shrugs, sighs, and lamenting looks; and whose "case" is always compassionately designed as "a sad case," whenever it is brought forward—which is pretty often in the course of conversation, at dinner-tables and tea-tables in the new suburb.

Socially, we may be all easily divided into two classes in this world—at least in the civ-

ilized part of it. If we are not the people whom others talk about, then we are sure to be the people who talk about others.

The young lady who had just entered Mr. Blyth's painting-room, belonged to the former order of human beings.

She was fated to be used as a constant subject of conversation by her fellow-creatures. Even her face alone—simply as a face—could not escape perpetual discussion; and that, too, among Valentine's friends, who all knew her well, and loved her dearly! It was the oddest thing in the world, but no one of them could ever agree with another (except on one point, to be presently mentioned), as to which of her personal attractions ought to be first selected for approval, or quoted as particularly asserting her claims to the admiration of all worshippers of beauty.

To take three or four instances of this. There was Mr. Gimble, the civil, hearty little picture-dealer, and a very good friend in every way to Valentine: there was Mr. Gimble, who stoutly declared that her principal charm was in her complexion, her fair, clear, wonderful complexion, which he would respectfully defy any artist alive to paint, let him try ever so hard, or be ever so great a man. Then came the Dowager Countess of Brambledown, the frolicsome old aristocrat, who was generally believed to be "a little cracked;" who haunted Mr. Blyth's studio, after having once given him an order to paint her cockatoo, her rare China tea-service, and her favorite muff, all in one group; and who differed entirely from the little picture-dealer. "Fiddle-dee-dee!" cried her ladyship, scornfully, on hearing Mr. Gimble's opinion quoted one day. "The man may know something about pictures, but he's evidently a perfect ass about women. Her complexion, indeed! I could make as good a complexion for myself (we old women are painters too, in our way, Blyth). Don't tell me about her complexion—it's her eyes! her incomparable blue eyes, which would have driven the young men of my time mad—mad, I give you my word of honor! Not a gentleman, sir, in my youthful days—and they were gentlemen then—but would have been too happy to run away with her for her eyes alone; and what's more, to have shot any man who said as much as 'Stop him!' Complexion, indeed, Mr. Gimble! I'll complexion you, next time I find my way into your picture-gallery! Take a pinch of snuff, Blyth; and never repeat nonsense in my hearing again."

There was Mr. Bullivant, the enthusiastic young sculptor, with the mangy flow of flaxen hair, and the plump, waxy face; who wrote poetry, and showed, by various sonnets, that he again differed completely about the young lady from the Dowager Countess

of Brambledown and Mr. Gimble. This gentleman sang melodiously, on paper—using, by the way, a professional epithet—about her "chiselled mouth,"

"Which breathed of rapture and the balmy South."

He expatiated on

"Her lips sweet smiling at her dimpled chin,  
Whose wealth of kisses gods might long to win—"

and much more to the same maudlin effect. In plain prose, the ardent Bullivant was all for the lower part of the young lady's face, and actually worried her, and Mr. Blyth, and everybody in the house, until he got leave to take a cast of it.

Lastly, there was Mrs. Blyth's father; a meek, modest, and aged man, with a continual cold in the head; who lived on marvellously to the utmost verge of human existence—as very poor men, with very large families, who would be much better out of this world than in it, very often do. There was this low-speaking, mildly-infirm, and perpetually-snuffing engraver, who, having once ventured to say in public that the young lady was "indeed a most charming person," remarked, on being asked to state what he most admired in her, that he thought it was her hair, "which was of such a nice lightish-brown color; and, perhaps, besides that it might be the pleasant way in which she carried her head; and, indeed, having got so far, possibly he might be allowed to go lower, and refer to the shape of her shoulders, into the bargain. But his opinion (here he blushed crimson) was quite good for nothing in tasty matters of this kind, and ought, of course, to be apologized for as soon as it was uttered." In speaking thus of his opinion, the worthy engraver certainly depreciated himself most unjustly: for, if the father of eight daughters can not succeed in learning (philoprogenitively speaking) how to be a good judge of women, what man can?

However, there was one point on which Mr. Gimble, Lady Brambledown, Mr. Bullivant, Mrs. Blyth's father, and hosts of friends besides, were all agreed without one discordant exception.

They unanimously asserted that the young lady's face was the nearest living approach they had ever seen to that immortal "Madonna" face, which has for ever associated the idea of beauty with the name of RAPHAEL. The resemblance struck everybody alike, even those who were but slightly conversant with pictures, the moment they saw her. Taken in detail, her features might be easily found fault with. Her eyes might be pronounced too large, her mouth too small, her nose not Grecian enough for some people's tastes. But the general effect of these features, the shape of her head and face, and especially her ha-



bitual expression, reminded all beholders at once and irresistibly of the image of softness, purity, and feminine gentleness, which has been engraven for ever on so many memories by the "Madonnas" of Raphael.

It was in consequence of this extraordinary resemblance, that her own English name of Mary had been, from the first, altered and Italianized by Mr. and Mrs. Blyth, and by all intimate friends, into "Madonna." One or two extremely strict and extremely imbecile people, captiously objected to any such familiar application of this name, as being open, in certain directions, to an imputation of irreverence. Mr. Blyth was not generally very quick at an answer; but, on this occasion, he had three answers ready before the objections were quite out of the objector's mouths.

In the first place, he said, that he and his friends used the name only in an artist-sense, and only with reference to Raphael's pictures. In the next place, he produced an Italian dictionary, and showed that "Madonna" had a second meaning in the language, signifying simply and literally, "My lady." And, in conclusion, he proved historically, that "Madonna" had been used in the old times as a prefix to the names of Italian women; quoting, for example, "Madonna Pia," whom he happened to remember just at that moment, from having once painted a picture of one of the scenes in her terrible story. These statements completely overthrew all objections; and the young lady was accordingly much better known in the painter's house as "Madonna" than as "Mary."

On now entering the studio, she walked up to Valentine, laid a hand lightly on each of his shoulders, and so lifted herself to him to be kissed on the forehead. Then she looked down on his palette, and, observing that some colors were still missing from it, began to search for them directly in the painting-box. She found the lost Vandyck brown in a moment; and held it up before Mr. Blyth with a pretty, arch look of inquiry and triumph. He nodded, smiled, and held out his palette for her to put the color on it herself. Having done this very neatly and delicately, she next turned toward the cat and kitten, with a merry look of astonishment in her soft, clear eyes.

"Snooks" had her favorites in the house, and always expressed her excessive attachment to Madonna by uttering, whenever the young lady touched her, an oddly-toned low cry—a sort of quick, prolonged purr, which never greeted any other member of the family. Valentine had often tried to deceive the cat in the dark, and make her distinguish other people as she distinguished Madonna, but it was useless. "Snooks" was not to be imposed upon, and only uttered her peculiar cry—as she was uttering

it now on the studio-rug—under the caressing touch of one light and ever-welcome hand.

Having left the cat to her repose, Madonna, looking round the room, immediately observed the cast on the office-stool; and, at the same time, Mr. Blyth, who saw the direction taken by her eyes, handed to her a port-crayon with some black chalk, which he had been carefully cutting to a point for the last minute or two. She took it with a little mock courtesy, pouting her lip slightly, as if drawing the Venus was work not much to her taste—then smiled, when she saw Valentine solemnly shaking his head, and frowning comically at her—then went away at once to the drawing-board, and sat down opposite Venus, in which position she offered as decided a living contradiction as ever was seen to the assertion of the classical idea of beauty, as expressed in the cast that she was now about to copy.

Mr. Blyth, on his side, set to work at last on the landscape; painting upon the bacchanalian nymphs, who sadly wanted a little brightening up—or, as he would have technically expressed it, a little "fetching out." While the painter and the young lady are industriously occupied with the business of the studio, there is leisure to remark on one rather perplexing characteristic of their intercourse, so far as it has yet proceeded on this particular winter's morning.

Ever since Madonna has been in the room, not one word has she spoken to Valentine; and not one word has Valentine (who can talk glibly enough to himself) spoken to her. He never said "Good morning" when he kissed her; or, "Thank you for finding the Vandyck brown;" or, "What do you think of Snook's new kitten?" or, "I have set the Venus, my dear, for your drawing lesson to-day." And she, woman as she is, has actually not asked him a single question! has even not said "poor pussy!" when she was fondling the cat on the rug. What can this absolute and remarkable silence mean, between two people who look as affectionately and pleasantly on each other as these two look, every time their eyes meet?

Why have they not once spoken together from the time when she opened the studio-door?

Is this one of the mysteries of the painter's fireside?

Who is Madonna?

What is her real name besides Mary?

Is it Mary Blyth?

Some years ago a curious adventure happened to Valentine in the circus of an itinerant equestrian company; and a very strange story was related to him by the wife of an ordinary stage-tumbler or clown.

But who is Madonna? And wherefore the absolute silence between her and Mr. Blyth?

The answer to these questions is only to be found in the adventure, in the story, and in the result which they brought about.

## CHAPTER V.

### THE ADVENTURE.

IN the autumn of 1838, Mrs. Blyth's malady had for some time past assumed the final and permanent form, from which it never afterward varied. She now suffered little actual pain, except when she quitted a recumbent posture. But the general weakness and disorganization produced by almost exclusive confinement to one position, had, even at this early period, begun to work sad changes in her personal appearance. She suffered that mortifying misfortune, however, just as bravely and resignedly as she had suffered the first great calamity of her incurable disorder. Valentine never showed that he thought her altered; Valentine's kindness was just as affectionate, as spontaneous, and as constant, as it had ever been in the happier days of their marriage. So encouraged, Lavinia had the heart to bear all burdens patiently; and could find sources of happiness for herself, where others could discover nothing but causes for grief.

The room she inhabited was already, through Valentine's self-denying industry, better furnished than any other room in the house; but was far from presenting the same appearance of refined luxury and tasteful completeness, to which it attained gradually in the course of after years.

The charming little maple-wood and ivory bookcase, with the prettily-bound volumes ranged in such bright regularity along its shelves, was there certainly as early as the autumn of 1838. It would not, though, at that time, have formed part of the furniture of Mrs. Blyth's room, but for a chance piece of good fortune, which her husband was doubtful about accepting when it first came to him. He had, it is true, often been to look at the bookcase in the upholsterer's show-room, but was almost resigned to view it as a forbidden treasure, far beyond any means of acquisition then at his disposal, unless indeed he availed himself of a certain professional invitation to the country which he had just received, and which, on his wife's account, he was very unwilling to accept.

Upon renewed consideration, however, the thought of his future pride and pleasure, if he could see the charming little bookcase in Lavinia's room, at last supplied

him with a motive for departure, which overcame his reluctance to separate himself for any length of time from his invalid wife. Having once arrived at a resolution, he immediately wrote two notes—one to order the new bookcase, the other to secure the means of paying for it, by accepting the professional invitation to the country.

This invitation had been sent to him by a clerical friend, the Reverend Doctor Joyce, rector of St. Judy's, in the large agricultural town of Rubbleford. Valentine had done a water-color drawing of one of the doctor's babies, when the family at the rectory were in London for a season, and this drawing had been shown to all the neighbors by the worthy clergyman on his return. Now, although Mr. Blyth was not over-successful in the adult department of portrait-art, he was invariably victorious in the baby-department. He painted all infants on one ingenious plan. He gave them the roundest eyes, the chubbiest red cheeks, the most serenely good-humored smiles, and the neatest and whitest caps ever seen on paper. If fathers and their male friends rarely appreciated the fidelity of his likenesses, mothers and nurses invariably made amends for their want of taste. The fair sex rallied round Valentine's baby-portraits to a woman; always proclaiming at sight of them with little screams of ecstasy, that for "sweetly-pretty" representations of infant innocence, the painter never yet lived who could be compared with Mr. Blyth.

It followed, therefore, almost as a matter of course, that the local exhibition of the doctor's drawing must bring offers of long-clothes-portrait employment to Valentine. Three resident families decided immediately to have their babies done, if the painter would only travel to their houses to take the likenesses. A bachelor sporting squire in the neighborhood also volunteered a commission of another sort. This gentleman arrived (by a legal process which it is hopeless to think of tracing) at the conclusion, that a man who was great at babies, must necessarily be marvellous at horses; and determined, in consequence, that Valentine should paint his celebrated cover-hack.

In writing to inform his friend of these offers, Doctor Joyce added another professional order on his own account, desiring that Mr. Blyth should take the portrait of his favorite curate, who, though very weakly and consumptive, was about to leave him to join a mission to the Cape; and whom the rector greatly feared he might never set eyes on again in this world. Here, then, were five commissions, which would produce enough, cheaply as Valentine worked, to pay, not only for the new bookcase, but for some new books to put in it when it came home.



Having left his wife in charge of two of her sisters, who were forbidden to leave the house till his return, Mr. Blyth started for the rectory, and once there, set to work on the babies with a zeal and good-humor which straightway won the hearts of mothers and nurses, and made him a great Rubbleford reputation in the course of a few days. Having done the babies to admiration, he next attacked the curate; producing a painfully striking likeness of that ill-fated gentleman; front face, pen in hand, looking up for inspiration over half-done sermon in neat black leather cover. And, no sooner, was this latter piece of workmanship turned out complete, than away went Valentine, brisk and dauntless as ever, to undertake the last great effort of immortalizing on canvass the bachelor squire's hack.

Here he had some trouble. The sporting gentleman would look over him while he painted; would bewilder him with the pedigree of the horse; would have the animal done in the most unpicturesque view; and sternly forbade all introduction of "tone," "light and shade," or purely artistic embellishment of any kind, in any part of the canvass. In short, the squire wanted a signboard instead of a picture, and he at last got what he wanted to his heart's content.

One evening, while Valentine, still deeply immersed in the difficulties of depicting the cover-hack, was returning to the rectory, after a day's work at the squire's house, his attention was suddenly attracted in the high street of Rubbleford, by a flaming placard pasted up on a dead wall opposite the market-house.

He immediately joined the crowd of rustics congregated around the many-colored and magnificent sheet of paper, and read at the top of it, in huge blue letters—"JUBBER'S CIRCUS. THE EIGHTH WONDER OF THE WORLD." After this came some small print, which nobody lost any time in noticing. But, below the small print appeared a perfect galaxy of fancifully shaped scarlet letters, which fascinated all eyes, and informed the public that the equestrian company included "MISS FLORINDA BELVERLEY, known" (here the letters turned suddenly green), "wherever the English language was known, as The Amazonian Empress of the Realms of Equitation." This announcement was followed by the names of inferior members of the company; by a programme of the evening's entertainments; by testimonials extracted from the provincial press; by illustrations of gentlemen with lusty calves and spangled drawers, and of ladies with smiling faces, shameless petticoats, and pirouetting legs. These illustrations, and the particulars which preceded them, were carefully digested by all Mr. Blyth's neighbors; but Mr. Blyth himself

passed them over unnoticed. His eyes had been caught by something at the bottom of the placard, which instantly absorbed his whole attention.

In this place the red letters appeared again, and formed the following words and marks of admiration:—

THE MYSTERIOUS FOUNDLING!

AGED TEN YEARS!!

TOTALLY DEAF AND DUMB!!!

Underneath came an explanation of what the red letters referred to occupying no less than three paragraphs of stumpy small print, every word of which Valentine eagerly devoured. This is what he read:—

"Mr. Jubber, as proprietor of the renowned circus, has the honor of informing the nobility, gentry, and public, that the above wonderful Deaf and Dumb Female Child will appear between the first and second parts of the evening's performances. Mr. J. has taken the liberty of entitling this Marvel of Nature, The Mysterious Foundling; no one knowing who her father is, and her mother having died soon after her birth, leaving her in charge of the Equestrian Company, who have been fond parents and guardians to her ever since.

"She was originally celebrated in the former annals of Jubber's Circus, as Eighth Wonder of the World, or The Hurricane Child of the Desert; having appeared in that character, whirled aloft at the age of seven years in the hand of Muley Ben Hassan, the renowned Devil-Scourer of Sahara, in his daring act of equitation, as exhibited to the terror and amazement of all England, in Jubber's Circus. At that time she had her hearing and speech quite perfect. But Mr. J. deeply regrets to state that a terrific accident happened to her soon afterward. Through no fault on the part of the Devil-Scourer (who never made a mistake in his life; and who, overcome by his feelings at the result of the above-mentioned frightful accident, has gone back to his native wilds a moody and broken-hearted man), she slipped from his hand while the three horses bestrode by the fiery but humane Arab were going at a gallop, and fell, shocking to relate, outside the Ring, on the boarded floor of the Circus. She was supposed to be dead. Mr. Jubber instantly secured the inestimable assistance of the Faculty, who found that she was still alive, and set her arm which had been broken. It was only afterward discovered that she had utterly lost her sense of hearing; or, to use the emphatic language of the medical gentlemen (who all spoke with tears in their eyes), that she had been struck stone deaf by the shock. Under these melancholy circumstances, it was found that the faculty of speech soon failed her alto-

gether; and she is now therefore Totally Deaf AND Dumb; but Mr. J. rejoices to say, quite cheerful and in good health notwithstanding.

"Mr. Jubber being himself the father of a family, ventures to think that these little particulars may prove of some interest to an Intelligent, a Sympathetic, and a Benevolent Public. He will simply allude, in conclusion, to the performances of the Mysterious Foundling, as exhibiting perfection hitherto unparalleled in the Art of Legerdemain, with wonders of untraceable intricacy on the cards, which were originally the result of abstruse calculations made by the renowned Algebraist, Mohammed Engedi, extending over a period of ten years, dating from the year 1215 of the Arab Chronology. More than this, Mr. Jubber will not venture to relate: for 'Seeing Is Believing,' and the Mysterious Foundling must be seen to be believed. For prices of admission consult bottom of bill."

Mr. Blyth read this grotesquely shocking narrative with sentiments which were anything rather than complimentary to the taste, the delicacy, and the humanity of the fluent Mr. Jubber. He consulted the bottom of the bill, however, as requested; and ascertained what were the prices of admission—then glanced at the top, and observed that the first performance was fixed for that very evening—looked about him absently for a minute or two—and resolved to be present at it.

Most assuredly Valentine's resolution did not proceed from that dastard insensibility to all decent respect for human suffering which could feast itself on the spectacle of calamity paraded for hire, in the person of a deaf and dumb child of ten years old. His motives for going to the circus were stained by no trace of such degradation as this. But what were they then? That question he himself could not have answered: it was a common predicament with him not to know his own motives, generally from not inquiring into them. There are men who run breathlessly—men who walk cautiously—and men who saunter easily—through the journey of life. Valentine belonged to the latter class; and, like the rest of his order, often strayed down a new turning, without being able to realize at the time what purpose it was which first took him that way. Our destinies shape the future for us out of strange materials: a travelling circus sufficed them, in the first instance, to shape a new future for Mr. Blyth.

He first went on to the rectory to tell them where he was going, and to get a cup of tea, and then hurried off to the circus—a wooden building in a field outside the town.

The performance had begun some time when he got in. The Amazonian empress

(known in mere ordinary male and female society as Miss Florinda Belverley) was dancing voluptuously on the back of a cantering piebald horse with a Roman nose Round and round, in her own undisputed "realm of equestration," careered the empress, beating time on the saddle with her imperial legs to the tune of "Let the Toast be Dear Woman," played with true amatory feeling by the band. Suddenly the melody changed to "See the Conquering Hero comes;" the piebald horse increased his speed; the empress raised a flag in one hand, and a javelin in the other, and began slaying invisible enemies in the empty air, at full (circus) gallop. The triumph was prodigious; the applause tremendous: Mr. Blyth alone sat unmoved. Miss Florinda Belverley was not even a good model to draw legs from, in the estimation of this anti-Amazonian painter!

And when the empress was succeeded by a Spanish guerilla, who robbed, murdered, danced, caroused, and made love on the back of a cream-colored horse—and when the guerilla was followed by a clown who performed frightful contortions, and made irresistibly comic faces—still Mr. Blyth exhibited not the slightest demonstration of astonishment or pleasure. It was only when a bell rang between the first and second parts of the performance, and the band struck up "Gentle Zittella," that he showed any symptoms of animation. Then he suddenly rose; and, moving down from the seat he had hitherto occupied to a bench close against the low partition which separated the ring from the audience, fixed his eyes intently on a doorway opposite to him, overhung by a frowsy red curtain with a tinsel border.

From this doorway there now appeared Mr. Jubber himself, clothed in white trousers with a gold stripe, and a green jacket with military epaulettes. He had big, bold eyes, dyed mustaches, great fat, flabby cheeks, long hair parted in the middle, a turn-down collar with a rose-colored handkerchief; and was, in every respect, the most atrocious-looking stage black-guard that ever painted an insolent and ugly face. He led with him, holding her hand—oh, soiling and shameful contact!—the little deaf and dumb girl, whose misfortune he had advertised to the whole population of Rubbleford.

The face and manner of the child, as she walked into the centre of the circus, and made her innocent courtesy and kissed her hand, went to the hearts of the whole audience in an instant. They greeted her with such a burst of applause as might have frightened a grown actress. But not a note from those cheering voices, not a breath of sound from those loudly clapping hands, could reach her; she could see that they



were welcoming her kindly, and that was all!

When the applause had subsided, Mr. Jubber asked for the loan of a handkerchief from one of the ladies present, and ostentatiously bandaged her eyes. He then lifted her upon the broad low wall which encircled the ring, and walked her round a little way (beginning from the door through which he had entered), inviting the spectators to test her total deafness by clapping their hands, shouting, or making any loud noise they pleased close at her ear. "You might fire off a cannon, ladies and gentlemen," said Mr. Jubber jocularly, "and it wouldn't make her start till after she'd smelt the smoke!"

To the credit of the Rubbleford audience, the majority of them declined making any practical experiments to test the poor child's utter deafness. The women set the example of forbearance, by entreating that the handkerchief might be taken off, so that they might see her pretty eyes again. This was done at once, and then she began to perform her conjuring tricks with Mr. Jubber and one of the ring-keepers on either side of her, officiating as assistants. These tricks, in themselves, were of the simplest and commonest kind; and derived all their attraction from the child's innocently earnest manner of exhibiting them, and from the novelty to the audience of communicating with her only by writing on a slate. They never tired of scrawling questions, of saying, "Poor little thing!" and of kissing her whenever they could get the opportunity, while she slowly went round the circus. "Deaf and dumb! ah, dear, dear, deaf and dumb!" was the general murmur of sympathy which greeted her from each new group, as she advanced; Mr. Jubber invariably adding with a smile: "And as you see, ladies and gentlemen, in excellent health and spirits, notwithstanding; as hearty and happy, I pledge you my sacred word of honor, as the very best of us!"

Now, while she was thus delighting the spectators on one side of the circus, how were the spectators on the other side, whose places she had not yet reached, contriving to amuse themselves?

From the moment of the little girl's first appearance, ample recreation had been unconsciously provided for them by a tall, stout, and florid stranger, who appeared suddenly to lose his senses the moment he set eyes on the deaf and dumb child. This gentleman jumped up and sat down again excitably a dozen times in a minute; constantly apologizing on being called to order, and constantly repeating the offence the moment afterward. Mad and mysterious words, never heard before in Rubbleford, poured from his lips. "Devotional beauty," "Early Italian art," "Fra Angelico's an-

gels," "Giotto and the cherubs," "Enough to bring the divine Raphael down from heaven to paint her." Such were a few fragments of the mad gentleman's incoherent mutterings, as they reached his neighbor's ears. The amusement they yielded was soon wrought to its climax by a joke from an attorney's clerk, who suggested that this queer man, with the rosy face, must certainly be the long-lost father of the "Mysterious Foundling!" Great gratification was consequently anticipated from what might take place when the child arrived opposite the bench occupied by the excitable stranger.

Slowly, slowly, the little light figure went round upon the broad partition wall, of the ring, until it came near, very near, to the place where Valentine was sitting.

Ah, woful sight! so lovely, yet so piteous to look on! Shall she never, never hear kindly human voices, the song of birds, the pleasant murmur of the trees again? Are all the sweet sounds that sing of happiness to childhood, silent for ever to her? From those fresh, rosy lips shall no glad words pour forth, when she runs and plays in the sunshine? Shall the clear, laughing tones be hushed always?—the young, tender life be for ever a speechless thing, shut up in dumbness from the free world of voices? O! Angel of judgment! hast thou snatched her hearing and her speech from this little child, to abandon her in helpless affliction to such profanation as she now undergoes? O Spirit of mercy! how long thy white-winged feet have tarried on their way to this innocent sufferer, to this lost lamb that can not cry to the fold for help! Lead, ah, lead her tenderly to such shelter as she has never yet found for herself! Guide her, pure as she is now from this tainted place to pleasant pastures, where the sunshine of human kindness shall be clouded no more, and love and pity shall temper every wind that blows over her with the gentleness of perpetual spring!

Slowly, slowly, the light figure went round the great circle of gazers, ministering obediently to their pleasure, waiting patiently till their curiosity was satisfied. And now, her weary pilgrimage was well nigh over for the night. She had arrived at the last group of spectators who had yet to see what she looked like close, and what tricks she could exhibit with her cards.

She stopped exactly opposite to Valentine; and when she looked up, she looked on him alone.

Was there something in the eager sympathy of his eyes as they met hers, which spoke to the little lonely heart in the sole language that could ever reach it? Did the child, with the quick instinct of the deaf and dumb, read his compassionate disposi-

tion, his quick impetuous sensibilities, his pity and longing to help her, in his expression at that moment? It might have been so. Her pretty, rosy lips, smiled on him as they had smiled on no one else that night; and when she held out some cards to be chosen from, she left unnoticed the eager hands extended on either side of her, and presented them to Valentine only.

He saw the small fingers trembling as they held the cards; he saw the delicate little shoulders and the poor frail neck and chest bedizened with tawdry mock jewelry and spangles; he saw the innocent young face, whose pure beauty no soil of stage paint could disfigure, with the smile still on the parted lips, but with a patient forlornness in the sad blue eyes, as if the seeing-sense that was left, mourned always for the hearing and speaking senses that were gone—he marked all these things in an instant, and felt that his heart was sinking as he looked. A dimness stole over his sight; a suffocating sensation oppressed his breathing; the lights in the circus danced and mingled together; he bent down over the child's hand, and took it in his own, twice kissed it fervently, then, to the utter amazement of the laughing crowd about him, rose up suddenly, and, muttering something about a pitiable sight that was too heart-rending to look at, forced his way out as violently as if he had been flying for his life.

There was a momentary confusion among the audience. Mr. Jubber was too old an adept in stage-business of all kinds not to know how to stop the growing tumult directly, and turn it into universal applause.

"Ladies and gentlemen," he cried, with a finely-modulated tremor in his voice—"I implore you to be seated, and to excuse the conduct of the party who has just absented himself. The talent of The Mysterious Foundling has overcome people in that way in every town of England (cheers). Do I err in believing that a Rubbleford audience can make kind allowances for their weaker fellow-creatures? (Bravo and cheers.) Thanks, a thousand thanks in the name of this darling and talented child, for your cordial, your generous, your affectionate, your inestimable reception of her exertions to-night!" And with this peroration Mr. Jubber left the ring with his pupil, amid the most vehement cheering and waving of hats and handkerchiefs. He was too much excited by his triumph to notice that the child, as she walked after him, looked wistfully, to the last, in the direction by which Valentine had gone out.

"The public like excitement," soliloquized Mr. Jubber, as he disappeared behind the red curtain. "I must have all this in the bills to-morrow. It's safe to

draw at least thirty shilling's worth extra into the house at night.

In the meantime, Valentine, after some blundering at wrong doors, at last found his way out of the circus, and stood alone on the cool grass, in the cloudless autumn moonlight. He struck his stick violently on the ground, which at that moment represented to him the head of Mr. Jubber, and, still muttering to himself, was about to return straight to the rectory, when he heard a breathless voice behind him, calling: "Stop, sir! oh, do please stop for one minute!"

He turned round. A fat, comely woman in a tawdry and tattered gown was running toward him as fast as her natural impediments to quick progression would permit.

"Please, sir," she cried—"Please, sir, wasn't you the gentleman that was taken queer at seeing our little Foundling? I was peeping through the red curtain, sir, just at the time."

Instead of answering the question, Valentine instantly began to rhapsodize about the child's face.

"Oh, sir! if you know anything about her," interposed the woman, "for God's sake don't scruple to tell it to me! I'm only Mrs. Peckover, sir, the wife of Jemmy Peckover, the clown, as they call him, that you saw in the circus to-night. But I took and nursed the little thing by her poor mother's own wish; and ever since that time—"

"My dear, good soul," said Mr. Blyth, "I know nothing of the poor little creature. I only wish from the bottom of my heart that I could do something to help her and make her happy. If Lavvie and I had had such an angel of a child as that," continued Valentine, clasping his hands together fervently, "deaf and dumb as she is, we should have thanked God for her every day of our lives!"

Mrs. Peckover was apparently not much used to hear such sentiments as these from strangers. She stared up at Mr. Blyth with two big tears rolling over her plump cheeks.

"Mrs. Peckover! Halloo there, Peck! where are you?" roared a stern voice from the stable-department of the circus, just as the clown's wife seemed about to speak again.

Mrs. Peckover started, courtesied, and, without uttering another word, went back even faster than she had come out. Valentine looked after her intently, but made no attempt to follow: he was thinking too much of the child to think of that. When he moved again, it was to return to the rectory.

He penetrated at once into the library, where Doctor Joyce was spelling over the "Rubbleford Mercury," while Mrs. Joyce sat opposite to him, knitting a fancy jacket



for her youngest but one. He was hardly inside the door before he began to expatiate in the wildest manner on the subject of the beautiful deaf and dumb girl. Pages would not suffice to repeat one half of the extravagances he now uttered. If ever man was in love with a child at first sight, he was that man. As an artist, as a gentleman of refined tastes, and as the softest-hearted of male human beings, in all three capacities, he was enslaved by that little innocent sad face. He made the doctor's head whirl again; he fairly stopped Mrs. Joyce's progress with the fancy jacket, as he sang the child's praises, and compared her face to every angel's face that had ever been painted, from the days of Giotto to the present time. At last when he had fairly exhausted his hearers and himself, he dashed abruptly out of the room to cool down his excitement by a moonlight walk in the rectory garden.

"What a very odd man he is!" said Mrs. Joyce, taking up a dropped stitch in the fancy jacket.

"Valentine, my love, is the best creature in the world," rejoined the doctor, folding up the "Rubbleford Mercury," and directing it for the post; "but, as I often used to tell his poor father (who never would believe me), a little cracked. I've known him to go on in this way about children before—though, I must own, not quite so wildly perhaps as he talked just now."

"Do you think he'll do anything imprudent about the child? Poor thing! I'm sure I pity her as heartily as anybody can."

"I don't presume to think," answered the doctor, calmly pressing the blotting-paper over the address he had just written. "Valentine is one of those people who defy all conjecture. No one can say what he will do, or what he won't. A man who can not resist an application for shelter and supper from any stray cur who wags his tail at him in the street; a man who blindly believes in the troubles of begging-letter impostors; a man whom I myself caught, last time he was down here, playing at marbles with three of my charity-boys in the street, and promising to treat them to hardbake and ginger-beer afterward, is, in short—is not a man whose actions it is possible to speculate on."

Here the door opened, and Mr. Blyth's head was popped in, surmounted by a ragged straw hat with a sky-blue riband round it. "Doctor," said Valentine, "may I ask an excellent woman, with whom I have made acquaintance, to bring the child here to-morrow morning for you and Mrs. Joyce to see?"

"Certainly," said the good-humored rector, laughing. "The child by all means, and the excellent woman too."

"Not if it's Miss Florinda Belverley!"

severely interposed Mrs. Joyce (who had read the circus-placard). "Florinda, indeed! Jezebel would be a better name for her!"

"My dear madam, it isn't Florinda," said Valentine, eagerly. "I quite agree with you; her name ought to be Jezebel. And, what's worse, her legs are out of drawing."

"Mr. Blyth!" exclaimed Mrs. Joyce, indignant at this professional criticism on Jezebel's legs.

"Why don't you tell us at once who the excellent woman is?" cried the doctor, exquisitely tickled at the allusion which had shocked his wife.

"Her name's Peckover," said Valentine, "she's a respectable married woman; she doesn't ride in the circus at all; and she nursed the poor child by her mother's own wish."

"We shall be delighted to see her to-morrow," said the warm-hearted rector—"or, no—stop! Not to-morrow; I shall be out. The day after. Cake and cowslip wine for the deaf and dumb child at twelve o'clock—eh, my dear?"

"That's right! God bless you! you're always kindness itself," cried Valentine; "I'll find out Mrs. Peckover, and let her know. Not a wink of sleep for me to-night—never mind!" Here Valentine suddenly shut the door, then as suddenly opened it again, and added: "I mean to finish that nasty horse-picture to-morrow, and go to the circus again in the evening." With these words he vanished; and they heard him soon afterward whistling his favorite "Drops of Brandy," in the rectory garden.

"Cracked! cracked!" cried the doctor. "Dear old Valentine!"

"I'm afraid his principles are very loose," said Mrs. Joyce, whose thoughts still ran on the unlucky professional allusion to Jezebel's legs.

The next morning, when Mr. Blyth presented himself at the stables, and went on with the portrait of the cover-hack, the squire had no longer the slightest reason to complain of the painter's desire to combine in his work picturesqueness of effect with accuracy of resemblance. Valentine argued no longer about introducing "light and shade," or "throwing cast-shadows," or "keeping the background subdued in tone." His thoughts were all with the deaf and dumb child and Mrs. Peckover, and he smudged away recklessly, just as he was told, without once uttering so much as a word of protest. By the evening he had concluded his labor. The squire said it was one of the best portraits of a horse that had ever been taken; to which piece of criticism the writer of the present narrative is bound in common candor to add,

that it was also the very worst picture that Mr. Blyth had ever painted.

On returning to Rubbleford, Valentine proceeded at once to the circus; placing himself, as nearly as he could, in the same position which he had occupied the night before.

The child was again applauded by the whole audience, and again went through her performance intelligently and gracefully, until she approached the place where Valentine was standing. She started as she recognized his face, and made a step forward to get nearer to him; but was stopped by Mr. Jubber, who saw that the people immediately in front of her were holding out their hands to write on her slate, and have her cards dealt round to them in their turn. The child's attention seemed to be distracted by seeing the stranger again who had kissed her hand so fervently—she began to look confused, and ready to cry—and ended by committing an open and most palpable blunder in the very first trick that she performed.

The spectators good-naturedly laughed, and some of them wrote on her slate, "Try again, little girl." Mr. Jubber made an apology, saying that the extreme enthusiasm of the reception accorded to his pupil had shaken her nerves; and then signed to her, with a benevolent smile, but with a very sinister expression in his eyes, to try another trick. She succeeded in this; but still showed so much hesitation that Mr. Jubber, fearing another failure, took her away with him while there was a chance of making a creditable exit. As she was led across the ring, the child looked intently at Valentine.

There was terror in her eyes—terror palpable enough to be remarked by some of the careless people near Mr. Blyth. "Poor little thing! she seems frightened at the man in the green jacket," said one. "And not without cause, I dare say," added another. "You don't mean that he could ever be brute enough to ill-use a child like that? it's impossible!" cried a third.

At this moment the clown entered the ring. The instant before he shouted the well-known "Here we are!" Valentine thought he heard a low strange cry behind the red curtain. He was not certain about it, but the mere doubt made his blood run chill. He listened for a minute anxiously. There was no chance now, however, of testing the correctness of his suspicion. The band had struck up a noisy jig-tune, and the clown was capering and tumbling wonderfully, amid roars of laughter.

"This may be my fault," thought Valentine. "This! What?" He was afraid to pursue the inquiry. His ruddy face suddenly turned pale; and he left the circus,

determined to find out what was really going on behind the red curtain.

He walked round the outside of the building, wasting some time before he found a door to apply at for admission. At last he came to a sort of passage, with some tattered horsecloths hanging over its outer entrance.

"You can't come in here," said a shabby lad, suddenly appearing from the inside in his shirt-sleeves.

Mr. Blyth took out half-a-crown. "I want to see the deaf and dumb child directly!"

"Oh, all right! go in," muttered the lad, pocketing the money greedily. "Jubber ain't there now? Only don't let him ketch yer there—that's all! She's nobow fit to be seen, mind ye; she have just been a-crying."

Valentine listened to no more, and hastily entered the passage. As soon as he was inside, a sound reached his ears at which his heart sickened and turned faint. No words can describe it in all the horror of its helplessness—for it was the moan of pain from a dumb human creature.

He thrust aside a curtain, and stood in a filthy place, partitioned off from the stables on one side, and the circus on the other, with canvass and old boards. There, on a wooden stool, sat the woman who had accosted him the night before, crying, and soothing the child who lay shuddering on her bosom. The sobs of the clown's wife mingled with the inarticulate wailing, so low yet so awful to hear; and both sounds were audible with a fearful, unnatural distinctness, through the merry melody of the jig, and the peals of hearty laughter from the delighted audience in the circus.

"Oh, my God!" cried Valentine, horror-struck at what he heard, "Stop her, don't let her moan in that way!"

The woman started from her seat, and put the child down, then recognised Mr. Blyth and rushed up to him.

"Hush!" she whispered eagerly; "don't call out like that! The villain, the brutal heartless villain is somewhere about the stables. If he hears you he'll come in and beat her again.—Oh, hush! hush, for God's sake! It's true—he beat her—the cowardly, hellish brute!—only for making that one little mistake with the cards. No! no! no! don't speak out loud or you'll ruin us. How did you ever get in here?—Oh! you must be quiet! There, sit down.—Hark! I'm sure he's coming! Oh! go away—go away!"

She tried to pull Valentine out of the chair into which she had thrust him but the instant before. He seized tight hold of her hand and refused to move. If Mr. Jubber had come in at that moment, he would have been thrashed within an inch of his life



The child had ceased moaning when she saw Valentine. She anxiously looked at him through her tears—then turned away quickly—took out her little handkerchief—and began to dry her eyes.

"I can't go yet—I'll promise only to whisper—you *must* listen to me," said Mr. Blyth, pale and panting for breath; "I mean to prevent this from ever happening again—don't speak!—I'll take that injured, beautiful, patient little angel away from this villainous place: I will, if I go before a magistrate! The rector's a magistrate—he's my friend—his name's Doctor Joyce—I'll take her away—"

The woman stopped him by pointing suddenly to the child.

She had put back the handkerchief, and was approaching him. She came close and laid one hand on his knee, and timidly raised the other as high as she could toward his neck. Standing so, she looked up quietly into his face. The pretty lips tried hard to smile once more; but they only trembled for an instant, and then closed again. The clear soft eyes, still dim with tears, sought his with an innocent gaze of inquiry and wonder. At that moment, the expression of the sad and lovely little face seemed to say, "You look as if you wanted to be kind to me; I wish you could find out some way of telling me of it."

Valentine's heart told him what was the only way. He caught her up in his arms, and half smothered her with kisses. The frail childish hands rose trembling, and clasped themselves gently round his neck; and the fair head drooped lower and lower wearily, until it lay on his shoulder.

The clown's wife turned away her face, desperately stifling with both hands the sobs that were beginning to burst from her afresh. Then whispered, "Oh, go, sir,—pray go! Some of the riders will be in here directly; you'll get us into dreadful trouble!"

Valentine rose, still holding the child in his arms. "I'll go if you promise me—"

"Oh! I'll promise anything, sir!"

"You know the rectory! Dr. Joyce's—the clergyman—my kind friend—"

"Yes, sir; I know it. You said that before. Do, please, for little Mary's sake, be as quick as you can!"

"Mary! Her name's Mary?" Valentine drew back in a corner, and began kissing the child again.

"You must be out of your senses to keep on in that way after what I've told you!" cried the clown's wife, wringing her hands in despair, and trying to drag him out of the corner. "Jubber and all of 'em will be in here in another minute. She'll be beaten again, if you're caught with her; O Lord! O Lord! will nothing make you understand that?"

He understood it only too well, and put the child down instantly, his face turning pale again, his agitation becoming so violent, that he never noticed the hand which she held out toward him, or the appealing look that accompanied the action, and said so plainly and pathetically: "I want to bid you good-by; but I can't say it as other children can." He never observed this: for he had taken Mrs. Peckover by the arm, and had drawn her away hurriedly after him into the passage.

The child made no attempt to follow them: she turned aside, and, sitting down in the darkest corner of the miserable place, rested her head against the rough partition, which was all that divided her from the laughing audience. Her lips began to tremble again: she took out the handkerchief once more, and hid her face in it.

"Now, recollect your promise," whispered Valentine to the clown's wife, who was slowly pushing him out, all the time he was speaking to her. "You must bring little Mary to the rectory to-morrow morning at twelve o'clock exactly—you must! or I'll come here and fetch her myself. You needn't believe *me*; I'm only an artist and a stranger: I don't expect you to believe *me*. But you must believe a clergyman—you can't help that! Doctor and Mrs. Joyce want to see your little Mary. It's her invitation, mind! You can't refuse the rector. He's the best and kindest man that ever—"

"I'll bring her, sir, if you'll only go now. I'll bring her—I will, as sure as I stand here!"

"If you don't!" cried Valentine, still distrustful, and trembling all over with agitation. "If you don't!"—

He stopped; for he suddenly felt the open air blowing on his face. The clown's wife was gone, and nothing remained for him to threaten, but the tattered horsecloths that hung over the empty doorway.

## CHAPTER VI.

### THE STORY.—PART FIRST.

It is a quarter to twelve by the hall-clock at the rectory, and one of the finest autumn mornings of the whole season. Vance, Doctor Joyce's middle-aged man-servant, or "Bishop" Vance, as the small wits of Rubbleford call him, in allusion to his sleek and solemn appearance, his respectable manner, his clerical cravat, and his speckless black garments, is placing the cake and cowslip wine on the dining-table, with as much stately formality and pompous precision as if his master expected an archbishop to lunch, instead of a clown's wife

and a little girl of ten years old. It is quite a sight to see Vance retiring, and looking at the general effect of knife and fork as he lays it down; or solemnly strutting about the room, with a spotless napkin waving gently in his hand; or patronizingly confronting the pretty housemaid at the door, and taking plates and dishes from her with the air of a kitchen sultan who can never afford to lose his dignity for a moment in the presence of the female-slaves.

The dining-room window opens into the rectory garden. The morning shadows cast by the noble old elm-trees that grow all around, are fading from the bright lawn. The rich flower-beds gleam like beds of jewels in the radiant sunshine. The rookery is almost deserted, a solitary sleepy *caw* being only heard now and then at long intervals. The singing of birds and the buzzing of busy insects sound faint, distant, and musical. On a shady seat, among the trees, Mrs. Joyce is just visible, working in the open air. One of her daughters sits reading on the turf at her feet. The other is giving the younger children a ride by turns on the back of a large Newfoundland dog, who walks along slowly with his tongue hanging out, and his great bushy tail wagging gently. A prettier scene of garden beauty and family repose could not be found in all England, than the scene which the view through the rectory window now presents.

The household tranquillity, however, is not entirely uninterrupted. Across the picture, on which Vance and the luncheon-table form the foreground, and the garden with Mrs. Joyce and the young ladies, the middle-distance and background, there flits from time to time an unquiet figure, which never leaves off fidgeting about here, there, and everywhere. This figure is always greeted by Leo, the Newfoundland dog, with an extra wag of the tail; and is apostrophized laughingly by the young ladies, under the appellation of "funny Mr. Blyth."

Valentine has in fact let nobody have any rest, either in the house or the garden, since the first thing in the morning. The rector, having some letters to write, has bolted himself into his study in despair, and defies his excitable friend from that stronghold, until the arrival of Mrs. Peckover and the deaf and dumb child has quieted the painter's fidgety impatience for the striking of twelve o'clock, and the presence of the visitors from the circus. As for the miserable Vance, Mr. Blyth has discomposed, worried, and put him out, till he looks suffocated with suppressed indignation. Mr. Blyth has invaded his sanctuary to ask whether the hall-clock is right, and has caught him "cleaning himself" in his shirt sleeves. Mr. Blyth has broken one of his tumblers, and ha mutinously insisted on showing him how to draw the cork of the

cowslip-wine bottle. Mr. Blyth has knocked down a fork and two spoons, just as they were laid straight, by whisking past the table like a madman on his way into the garden. Mr. Blyth has bumped up against the housemaid on returning—again like a madman—to the dining-room, and has apologized to Susan by a joke which makes her giggle ecstatically in Vance's own face. If this sort of thing is to go on for a day or two longer, though he has been twenty years at the rectory, Vance will be most assuredly goaded into giving the doctor warning.

It is five minutes to twelve. Valentine has skipped into the garden for the thirtieth time at least, to beg that Mrs. Joyce and the young ladies will repair to the dining-room, and be ready to set Mrs. Peckover and her little charge quite at their ease the moment they come in. Mrs. Joyce consents to this proposal at last, and takes his offered arm; touching it, however, very gingerly, and looking straight before her while he talks, with an air of matronly dignity and virtuous reserve. She is still convinced that Mr. Blyth's principles are extremely loose, and treats him exactly as she would have treated Don Juan himself under similar circumstances.

They all go into the dining-room. Mrs. Joyce and her daughters take their places, looking deliciously cool and neat in their bright morning-dresses. Leo drops down lazily on the rug inside the window, with a thump of his great heavy body that makes the glasses ring. The doctor comes in with his letters for the post, and apostrophizes Valentine with a harmless clerical joke. Vance solemnly touches up the already perfect arrangement of the luncheon table. The clock strikes twelve. A faint meek ring is heard at the rectory-bell.

Vance struts slowly to the door, when—heaven and earth! are no household conventions held sacred by these painters of pictures? Mr. Blyth dashes past him with a shout of "Here they are!" and flies into the hall to answer the gate himself. Vance turns solemnly round toward his master, trembling and purple in the face, with an appealing expression, which says plainly enough: "If you mean to stand this sort of outrage, sir, I beg most respectfully to inform you that I don't." The rector bursts out laughing; the young ladies follow his example; the Newfoundland dog jumps up, and joins in with his mighty bark. Mrs. Joyce sits silent, and looks at Vance, and sympathizes with him.

The voice of Mr. Blyth is soon heard again in the hall, talking at a prodigious rate, without one audible word of answer proceeding from any other voice. The door of the dining-room, which has swung to, is suddenly pushed open, jostling the outraged



Vance, who stands near it, into such a miserably undignified position flat against the wall, that the young ladies begin to titter behind their handkerchiefs as they look at him. Valentine enters, leading in Mrs. Peckover, and the deaf and dumb child, with such an air of supreme triumph and happiness, that he looks absolutely handsome for the moment. The rector, who is, in the best and noblest sense of the word, a gentleman, receives Mrs. Peckover as politely and cordially as he would have received the best lady in Rubbleford. Mrs. Joyce comes forward with him, very kind, too, but a little reserved in her manner, nevertheless: being possibly apprehensive that any woman connected with the circus, must necessarily be tainted with some slight flavor of Miss Florinda Belverley. The young ladies drop down into the most charming positions on either side of the child, and fall straightway into fits of ecstasy over her beauty. The dog walks up, and pokes his great honest muzzle among them companionably. Vance stands rigid against the wall, and disapproves strongly of the whole proceeding.

Poor Mrs. Peckover! She had never been in such a house as the rectory, she had never spoken to a doctor of divinity before in her life. She was very hot and red and trembling, and made fearful mistakes in grammar, and clung as shyly to Mr. Blyth as if she had been a little girl. The rector soon contrived, however, to settle her comfortably in a seat by the table. She courtesied reverentially to Vance, as she passed by him; doubtless under the impression that he was a second doctor of divinity, even greater and more learned than the first. He stared in return straight over her head, with small unwinking eyes, his cheeks turning slowly from deep red to dense purple. Mrs. Peckover shuddered inwardly, under the conviction that she had insulted a dignitary, who was hoisted up on some clerical elevation, too tremendous to be courtesied to by such a social atom as a clown's wife.

Mrs. Joyce had to call three times to her daughters before she could get them to the luncheon-table. If she had possessed Valentine's eye for the picturesque and beautiful, she would certainly have been incapable of disturbing the group which her third summons broke up.

In the centre stood the deaf and dumb child, dressed in a white frock, with a little silk mantilla over it, made from a cast-off garment belonging to one of the ladies of the circus. She wore a plain straw hat, ornamented with a morse. A narrow white band, and tied under the chin with the same material. Her clear, delicate complexion was overspread by a slight rosy tinge—the tender coloring of nature, instead

of the coarsely-glaring rouge with which they always disfigured her when she appeared before the public. Her wondering blue eyes, that looked so sad in the piercing gas-light, appeared to have lost that sadness in the mellow atmosphere of the rectory dining-room. The tender and touching stillness which her affliction had cast over her face, seemed a little at variance with its childish immaturity of feature and roundness of form, but harmonized exquisitely with the quiet smile which seemed habitual to her when she was happy—gratefully and unrestrainedly happy, as she now felt among the new friends who were receiving her, not like a stranger and an inferior, but like a younger sister who had been long absent from them.

She stood near the window, the centre figure of the group, offering a little slate that hung by her side, with a pencil attached to it, to the rector's eldest daughter, who was sitting at her right hand on a stool. The second of the young ladies knelt on the other side, with both her arms round the dog's neck; holding him back as he stood in front of the child, so as to prevent him from licking her face, which he had made several resolute attempts to do, from the moment when she first entered the room. Both the doctor's daughters were healthy rosy English beauties in the first bloom of girlhood; and both were attired in the simplest and prettiest muslin dresses, very delicate in color and pattern. Pity and admiration, mixed with some little perplexity and confusion, gave an unusual animation to their expressions; for they could hardly accustom themselves as yet to the poor child's calamity. They talked to her eagerly, as if she could hear and answer them—while she, on her part, stood looking alternately from one to the other, watching their lips and eyes intently, and still holding out the slate, with her innocent gesture of invitation and gentle look of apology, for the eldest girl to write on. The varying expressions of the three; the difference in their positions; the charming contrast between their light graceful figures, and the bulky strength and grand solidity of form in the noble Newfoundland dog who stood among them; the lustrous background of lawn and flowers and trees, seen through the open window; the sparkling purity of the sunshine which fell brightly over one part of the group; the transparency of the warm shadows that lay so caressingly, sometimes on a round smooth cheek, sometimes over ringlets of glistening hair, sometimes on the crisp folds of a muslin dress—all these accidental combinations of the moment, these natural and elegant positions of nature's setting, these accessories of light and shade, and background garden objects beautifully and tenderly filling up the scene

presented together a picture which it was a luxury to be able to look on, which it seemed little short of absolute profanation to disturb.

Mrs. Joyce, nevertheless, pitilessly disarranged it. In a moment the living picture was destroyed: the young ladies were called to their mother's side; the child was placed between Valentine and Mrs. Peckover; and the important business of luncheon began in earnest.

It was wonderful to hear how Mr. Blyth talked; how he alternately glorified the clown's wife for the punctual performance of her promise, and appealed triumphantly to the rector to say, whether he had not underrated rather than exaggerated little Mary's beauty. It was also wonderful to see Mrs. Peckover's blank look of astonishment when she found the rigid doctor of divinity, who would not so much as notice her courtesy, suddenly relax into blandly supplying her with everything she wanted to eat or drink. But a very much more remarkable study of human nature than either of these, was afforded by the grimly patronizing and profoundly puzzled aspect of Vance, as he waited, under protest, upon a woman from a travelling circus. It is something to see the pope serving the pilgrims their dinner, during the holy week at Rome. Even that astounding sight, however, fades into nothing, as compared with the sublimer spectacle of Mr. Vance waiting upon Mrs. Peckover.

The rector, who was a sharp observer in his own quiet unobtrusive way, was struck by two peculiarities in little Mary's behavior during lunch. In the first place, he remarked with some interest and astonishment that, while the clown's wife was, not unnaturally, very shy and embarrassed in her present position, among strangers who were greatly her social superiors, little Mary had maintained her self-possession, and had unconsciously adapted herself to her new sphere, from the moment when she first entered the dining-room. In the second place, he observed that she constantly nestled close to Valentine; looked at him oftener than she looked at any one else; and seemed to be always trying, sometimes not unsuccessfully, to guess what he was saying to others by watching his expression, his manner, and the action of his lips. "That child's character is no common one," thought Doctor Joyce; "she is older at heart than she looks; and is almost as fond of Blyth already as he is of her. Good old Valentine! it's pleasant to see that all his raptures have not been thrown away on a little fool with a pretty face."

When lunch was over, the eldest Miss Joyce whispered a petition in her mother's ear. "May Carry and I take the dear little girl out with us to see our gardens, mamma?"

"Certainly, my love, if she likes to go. You had better ask her—ah, dear! dear! I forgot—I mean, write on her slate. It's so hard to remember she's deaf and dumb, when one sees her sitting there looking so pretty and happy. She seems so like the cake. Remind me, Emmy, to tie some up for her in paper before she goes away."

Miss Emily and Miss Caroline went round to the child directly, and made signs for the slate. They alternately wrote on it with immense enthusiasm, until they had filled one side; signing their initials in the most business-like manner at the end of each line, thus:—

"Oh, do come and see my gardens. E. J."—"We will gather you such a nice nosegay. C. J."—"I have got some lovely little guinea-pigs. E. J."—"And Mark, our gardener, has made me a summer-house, with such funny chairs in it. C. J."—"You shall have my parasol to keep the sun off. E. J."—"And we will send Leo into the water as often as you like him to go. C. J."—Thus they went on till they got to the bottom of the slate.

The child, after nodding her head and smiling as she read each fresh invitation, turned the slate over, and, with some little triumph at showing that she could write too, began slowly to trace some large text letters in extremely crooked lines. It took her a long time—especially as Mr. Blyth was breathlessly looking over her shoulder all the while—to get through these words: "Thank you for being so kind to me. I will go with you anywhere you like."

In a few minutes more the two young ladies and little Mary were walking over the bright lawn, with Leo in close attendance, carrying a stick in his mouth.

Valentine started up to follow them; then appeared suddenly to remember something, and sat down again with a very anxious expression on his face. He and Doctor Joyce looked at one another significantly. Before breakfast, that morning, they had been closeted at a private interview. Throughout the conversation which then took place, Mr. Blyth had been unusually quiet, and very much in earnest. The doctor had begun by being incredulous and sarcastic in a good-humored way; but had ended by speaking seriously, and making a promise under certain conditions. The time for the performance of that promise had now arrived.

"You needn't wait, Vance," said the rector. "Never mind about taking the things away. I'll ring when you're wanted."

Vance gloomily departed.

"Now the young people have left us, Mrs. Peckover," said Doctor Joyce, turning to the clown's wife, "there is a good opportunity for my making a proposition to you, on behalf of my old and dear friend



here, Mr. Blyth; who, as you must have noticed, feels great sympathy and fondness for your little Mary. But, before I mention this proposal (which I am sure you will receive in the best spirit, however it may surprise you), I should wish—we should all wish, if you have no objection—to hear any particulars you can give us on the subject of this poor child. Do you feel any reluctance to tell us in confidence whatever you know about her?”

“O dear no, sir!” exclaimed Mrs. Peckover, very much amazed. “I should be ashamed of myself if I went making any objections to anything you wanted to know about little Mary. But I’m almost afraid—”

“There! I knew she wouldn’t object,” interrupted Valentine, letting his exultation get the better of his self-control. “Excellent soul, I told you, doctor, she wouldn’t object—”

“My dear Valentine,” interposed the rector, “remember the terms of our agreement. You were to leave me to be spokesman.”

“I won’t speak another word,” cried Mr. Blyth, “upon my honor, I won’t speak another word.”

“I think you were about to say something more?” continued Doctor Joyce, addressing Mrs. Peckover.

“Oh, nothing particular, if you please, sir,” answered the clown’s wife, nervously. “I was only afraid like—I know it’s very foolish—but it’s strange to me to be in a beautiful place like this, drinking wine with gentlefolks—and I was almost afraid—”

“Not afraid, I hope, that you couldn’t tell us what we are so anxious to know, quite at your ease, and in your own way?” said the rector, pleasantly. “Pray, Mrs. Peckover, believe I am sincere in saying that we meet on equal terms here. I have heard from Mr. Blyth of your motherly kindness to that poor helpless child; and I am indeed proud to take your hand, and happy to see you here, as one who should always be an honored guest in a clergyman’s house—the doer of a good and charitable deed. I have always, I hope, valued the station to which it has pleased God to call me, because it especially offers me the privilege of being the friend of all my fellow-Christians, whether richer or poorer, higher or lower in worldly rank, than I am myself.”

Mrs. Peckover’s eyes began to fill. She could have worshipped Doctor Joyce at that moment.

“Mr. Blyth!” exclaimed Mrs. Joyce sharply, before another word could be spoken—“excuse me, Mr. Blyth; but really—”

Valentine was trying to pour out a glass of sherry for Mrs. Peckover. His admiration of the doctor’s last speech, and his extreme anxiety to reassure the clown’s wife,

must have interfered somehow with his precision of eye and hand; for one half of the wine, as he held the decanter, was dropping into the glass, and the other half was dribbling into a little river on the cloth. Mrs. Joyce thought of the walnut-wood table underneath, and felt half-distracted as she spoke. Mrs. Peckover, delighted to be of some use, forgot her company-manners in an instant, pulled out her red cotton pocket-handkerchief, and darted at the spilt sherry. But the rector was even quicker with his napkin. Mrs. Peckover’s cheeks turned the color of her handkerchief, as she put it back in her pocket, and sat down again.

“Much obliged—no harm done—much obliged, ma’am,” said Doctor Joyce. “Now, Valentine, if you don’t leave off apologizing, and sit down directly in that arm-chair against the wall, I shall take Mrs. Peckover into my study, and hear everything she has to say, at a private interview. There! we are all comfortable and composed again at last, and ready to be told how little Mary and the good friend who has been like a mother to her, first met.”

Thus appealed to, Mrs. Peckover began her narrative; sometimes addressing it to the doctor, sometimes to Mrs. Joyce, and sometimes to Valentine. From beginning to end, she was only interrupted at rare intervals by a word of encouragement, or sympathy, or surprise, from her audience. Even Mr. Blyth sat most uncharacteristically still and silent; his expression alone showing the varying influences of the story on him, from its strange commencement to its melancholy close.

“It’s better than ten years ago, sir,” began the clown’s wife, speaking first to Doctor Joyce, “since my little Tommy was born; he being now, if you please, at school and costing nothing, through a presentation, as they call it, I think, which was given us by a kind patron to my husband. Some time after I had got well over my confinement, I was out one afternoon taking a walk with the baby and Jimmy; which last is my husband, ma’am. We were at Bangbury then, just putting up the circus: it was a fine large neighborhood, and we hoped to do good business there. Jimmy and me and the baby went into the fields, and enjoyed ourselves very much; it being such nice, warm spring-weather, I remember, though it was March at the time. We came back to Bangbury by the road; and just as we got near the town, we see a young woman sitting on the bank, and holding her baby in her arms, just as I had got my baby in mine.

“‘How dreadful ill and weak she do look, don’t she?’ says Jimmy. Before I could say as much as ‘Yes,’ she stares up at us, and asks in a wild voice, though it

wasn't very loud either, if we can tell her the way to Bangbury workhouse. Having pretty sharp eyes of our own, we both of us knew that a workhouse was no fit place for her. Her gown was very dusty, and one of her boots was burst, and her hair was sunk in her head, like; but we saw somehow that she was a lady—or, if she wasn't exactly a lady, that no workhouse was proper for her, at any rate. I stooped down to speak to her; but her baby was crying so dreadful she could hardly hear me. 'Is the poor thing ill?' says I. 'Starving,' says she, in such a desperate, fierce way, that it gave me quite a turn. Is it your child?' says I, a bit frightened about how she'd answer me, but wanting so much to find out that I risked it. 'Yes,' she says, in quite a new voice, very soft and sorrowful, and bending her face away from me over the child. 'Then why don't you suckle it?' says I. She looks up at me, and then at Jemmy, and shakes her head, and says nothing. I give my baby to Jemmy to hold, and went and sit down by her. He walked away a little; and I whispers to her again, 'Why don't you suckle it?' and she whispers to me, 'My milk's all dried up.' I couldn't wait to hear no more till I'd got her baby at my own breast.

"That was the first time I suckled little Mary, ma'am. She wasn't a month old then, and, oh, so weak and small! such a mite of a baby compared to mine!"

"You may be sure, sir, that I asked the young woman lots of questions, while I was sitting side by side with her. She stared at me with a dazed look in her face, seemingly quite stupefied by weariness or grief, or both together. Sometimes she gave me an answer, and sometimes she wouldn't. She was very secret. She wouldn't say where she come from, or who her friends were, or what her name was. She said she could never have name or home or friends again. I just quietly stole a look down at her left hand, and saw that there was no wedding-ring on her finger, and guessed what she meant. 'Does the father know you're wandering about in this way?' says I. She flushes up directly; 'No!' says she, 'he doesn't know where I am. He never had any love for me, and he has no pity for me now. God's curse on him wherever he goes!' 'Oh, hush! hush!' says I, 'don't talk like that!' 'Why do you ask me questions?' says she, more fiercely than ever. 'What business have you to ask me questions that make me mad?' 'I've only got one more to bother you with,' says I, quite cool; 'and that is, haven't you got any money at all with you?' You see, ma'am, now I'd got her about at my own bosom, I didn't care for

what she said, or fear for what she might do to me. The poor mite of a baby was sure to be a peacemaker between us, sooner or later.

"It turned out she'd got sixpence and a few halfpence—not a farthing more, and too proud to ask help from any one of her friends. I managed to worm out of her that she had run away from home before her confinement, and had gone to some strange place to be confined, where they'd ill-treated and robbed her. She hadn't long got away from the wretches who'd done it. By the time I'd found out all this, her baby was quite quiet, and ready to go to sleep. I gave it her back. She said nothing; but took and kissed my hand, her lips feeling like burning coals on my flesh. 'You're kindly welcome,' says I, a little flustered at such a queer way o' thanking me. 'Just wait a bit, while I speak to my husband.' Though she'd been and done wrong, I couldn't for the life of me help pitying her for all her fierce ways. She was so young, and so forlorn and ill, and had such a beautiful face (little Mary's is the image of it, specially about the eyes), and seemed so like a lady, that it was almost a sin, as I thought, to send her to such a place as a workhouse.

"Well: I went and told Jemmy all I had got out of her—my own baby kicking and crowing in my arms again, as happy as a king, all the time I was speaking. 'It seems shocking,' says I, 'to let such as her go into a workhouse. What had we better do?' Says Jemmy, 'Let's take her with us to the circus and ask Peggy Burke.'

"Peggy Burke, if you please, sir, was the finest rider that ever stepped on a horse's back. We've had nothing in our circus to come near her since she went to Astley's. She was the wildest devil of an Irish girl—oh! I humbly beg your pardon, sir, for saying such a word; but she really was so wild, I hope you'll excuse it. She'd go through fire and water, as they say, to serve people she liked; but, as for them she didn't, she'd often use her riding-whip among 'em as free as her tongue. That cowardly brute Jubber would never have beaten my little Mary, if Peggy had been with us still! He was so frightened of her that she could twist him round her finger; and she did, for he durstn't quarrel with the best rider in England, and let other circusmen get hold of her. Peggy was a wonderful sharp girl besides, and was always fond of me, and took my part; so when Jemmy said he thought it best to ask her what we had better do, you may be sure that I thought it best too. We took the young woman and the baby with us to the circus at once. She never asked any questions; she didn't seem to care where she went, or what she did; she was dazed and despe



rate—a sight, ma'am to make your heart ache.

"They were just getting tea in the circus, which was nearly finished. We mostly tea and dinner there, sir; finding it come cheaper in the end to mess together when we can. Peggy Burke, I remember, was walking about on the grass outside, whistling (that was one of her queer ways) 'The girl I left behind me.' 'Ah! Peck,' says she, 'what have you been after now? Who's the company lady ye've brought to tea with us?' I told her, sir, all I've just told you; while Jemmy set the young woman down on one of our trunks, and got her a cup of tea. 'It seems dreadful,' says I when I'd done, 'to send such as her to the workhouse, don't it?' 'Workhouse!' says Peggy, firing up directly; 'I only wish we could catch the man who's got her into the scrape, and put him in there on water-gruel for the rest of his life. I'd give a shillin' a wheal out of my own pocket for the blessed privilege of scoring his thief's face with my whip, till his own mother wouldn't know him!' And then she went on, sir, abusing all the men in her Irish way, which I can't repeat. At last she stops, and claps me on the back. 'You're a darlin' old girl, Peck!' says she, 'and your friends are my friends. Stop where you are, and let me speak a word to the young woman on the trunk.'

"After a little while she comes back, and says, 'I've done it, Peck! She's mighty close; and as proud as Lucifer: but she's only a dressmaker, for all that.' 'A dressmaker!' says I; 'how did you find out she was a dressmaker?' 'Why, I looked at her forefinger, in course,' says Peggy, 'and saw the pricks of the needle on it, and soon made her talk a bit after that. She knows fancy-work and cuttin' out—would ye ever have thought it? And I'll show her how to give the workhouse the go-by to-morrow, if she only holds out, and keeps in her senses. Stop where you are, Peck! I'm going to make Jubber put his dirty hand into his pocket and pull out some money; and that's a sight worth stoppin' to see any day in the week.'

"I waited as she told me; and she called for Jubber, just as if he'd been her servant: and he come out of the circus. 'I want ten shillings advance of wages for that lady on the trunk,' says Peggy. He laughed at her 'Show your ugly teeth at me again,' says she, 'and I'll box your ears.' I've my light hand for a horse's mouth, and my heavy hand for a man's cheek; you ought to know that by this time! Pull out the ten shillings.' 'What for?' says he, frowning at her. 'Just this,' says she. 'I mean to leave your circus, unless I get those six character dresses you promised me; and the lady there can do them up beautiful. Pull out the ten shillings! for I've made

up my mind to appear before the Bangbury public on Garryowen's back, as six women at once.'

"What she meant by this, sir, was that she was to have six different dresses on, one over another; and was to go galloping round the ring on Garryowen (which was a horse), beginning, I think it was, as Empress of Roossia; and then throwing off the top dress without the horse stopping, and showing next as some famous Frenchwoman, in the dress underneath; and keeping on so with different nations, till she got down to the last dress, which was to be Britannia and the Union-Jack. We'd go bits of remnants, and old dresses and thing to make and alter, but hadn't anybody clever enough at cutting out, and what they call 'Costoom,' to do what Peggy wanted—Jubber being too stingy to pay the regular people who understand such things. The young woman, knowing as she did about fancy work, was just what was wanted, if she could only get well enough to use her needle. 'I'll see she works the money out,' says Peggy; 'but she's dead beat to-night, and must have her rest and bit o' supper, before she begins to-morrow.' Jubber wanted to give less than ten shillings; but between threatening and saying it should buy twenty shillings' worth of tailor's work, she got the better of him. And he gave the money, sulky enough.

"'Now,' says Peggy, 'you take her away, and get her a lodging in the place where you're staying; and I'll come to-morrow with some of the things to make up. But, ah dear me, sir, she was never to work as much as sixpence of that ten shillings out. She was took bad in the night, and got so much worse in the morning that we had to send for the doctor.'

"As soon as he'd seen her, he takes me into the passage, and says he to me, 'Do you know who her friends are?' 'No, sir,' says I; 'I can't get her to tell me. I only met her by accident yesterday.' 'Try and find out again,' says he; 'for I'm afraid she won't live over the night. I'll come back in the evening and see if there is any change.'

"Peggy and me went into her room together; but we couldn't even get her to speak to us for ever so long a time. All at once she cries out, 'I can't see things as I ought. Where's the woman who suckled my baby when I was alone by the roadside?' 'Here,' says I—'here; I've got hold of your hand. Do tell us where we can write to about you.' 'Will you promise to take care of my baby, and not let it go into the workhouse?' says she. 'Yes, I promise,' says I; 'I do indeed promise with my whole heart.' 'We'll all take care of the baby,' says Peggy; 'only you try and cheer up, and you'll get well enough to see

me on Garryowen's back, before we leave Bangbory—you will for certain, if you cheer up a bit.' 'I give my baby,' she says, clutching tight at my hand, 'to the woman who suckled it by the roadside; and I pray God to bless her and forgive me, for Jesus Christ's sake.' After that, she lay quite quiet for a minute or two. Then she says faintly, 'Its name's to be Mary. Put it into bed to me again; I should like to touch its cheek, and feel how soft and warm it is, once more.' And I took the baby out of its crib, and lifted it, asleep as it was, into the bed by her side, and guided her hand up to its cheek. I saw her lips move a little; and bent down over her. 'Give me one kiss,' she whispers, 'before I die.' And I kissed her, and tried to stop crying as I did it. Then I says to Peggy, 'You wait here while I run and fetch the doctor back; for I'm afraid she's going fast.' He wasn't at home when I got to his house. I didn't know what to do next, when I see a gentleman in the street who looked like a clergyman, and I asked him if he was one; and he said 'Yes;' and he went back with me. I heard a low wailing and crying in the room, and saw Peggy sitting on the bundle of dresses she'd brought in the morning, rocking herself backward and forward as Irish people always do when they're crying. I went to the bed, and looked through the curtains. The baby was still sleeping as pretty as ever, and its mother's hand was touching one of its arms. I was just going to speak to her again, when the clergyman said 'Hush,' and took a bit of looking-glass that was set up on the chimney-piece, and held it over her lips. She was gone. Her poor white wasted hand lay dead on the living baby's arm.

"I answered all the clergyman's questions quite straight forward, telling him everything I knew from beginning to end. When I'd done, Peggy starts up from the bundle, and says, 'Mind, sir, whatever you do, the child's not to be took away from this person here, and sent to the workhouse. The mother give it to her on that very bed, and I'm a witness of it.' 'And I promised to be a mother to the baby, sir,' says I. He turns round to me, and praises me for what I done, and says nobody shall take it away from me, unless them as can show their right comes forward to claim it. 'But now,' says he, 'we must think of other things. We must try and find out something about this poor woman who has died in such a melancholy way.'

"It was easier to say that than to do it. The poor thing had nothing with her but a change of linen for herself and the child, and that gave us no clue. Then we searched her pocket. There was a cambric handkerchief in it, marked 'M. G.'; and some bits of rucks to sop for the child; and the

sixpence and half-pence which she had when I met her; and beneath all, in a corner as if it had been forgotten there, a small hair bracelet. It was made of two kinds of hair—very little of one kind, and a good deal of the other. And on the flat clasp of the bracelet there was cut in tiny letters, '*In memory of S. G.*' I remember all this, sir, for I've often and often looked at the bracelet since that time.

"We found nothing more; no letters, or cards, or anything. The clergyman said that the 'M. G.' on the handkerchief must be the initials of her name; and the 'S. G.' on the bracelet must mean, he thought, some relation whose hair she wore as a sort of keepsake. I remember Peggy and me wondering which was S. G.'s hair; and who the other person might be, whose hair was wove into the bracelet. But the clergyman he soon cut us short by asking for pen, ink, and paper directly. 'I'm going to write out an advertisement,' says he, 'saying how you met with the young woman, and what she was like, and how she was dressed.' 'Do you mean to say anything about the baby, sir?' says I. 'Certainly,' says he, 'it's only right if we get at her friends by advertising, to give them the chance of doing something for the child. And if they live anywhere in this county, I believe we shall find them out; for the *Bangbory Chronicle*, into which I mean to put the advertisement, goes everywhere in our part of England.'

"So he sits down, and writes what he said he would, and takes it away to be printed in the next day's number of the newspaper. 'If nothing comes of this,' says he, 'I think I can manage about the burial with a charitable society here. I'll take care and inform you the moment the advertisement's answered.' I hardly know how it was, sir; but I almost hoped they wouldn't answer it. Having suckled the baby myself, and kissed its mother before she died, I couldn't make up my mind to the chance of its being took away from me just then. I ought to have thought how poor we were, and how hard it would be for us to bring the child up. But, somehow, I never did think of that—no more did Peggy—no more did Jemmy; not even when we put the baby to bed that night along with our own.

"Well, sir, sure enough, two days after the advertisement come out, it was answered in the cruellest letter I ever set eyes on. The clergyman he come to me with it. 'It was left this evening,' says he, 'by a strange messenger, who went away directly. I told my servant to follow him, but it was too late—he was out of sight.' The letter was very short, and we thought it was in a woman's handwriting—a feigned handwriting, the clergyman said. There



## CHAPTER VII.

## THE STORY.—PART SECOND.

was no name signed, and no date at top or bottom. Inside it there was a ten-pound bank-note; and the person as sent it, wrote that it was enclosed to bury the young woman decently. 'She was better dead than alive'—the letter went on—'after having disgraced her father and her relations. As for the child, it was the child of sin; and had no claim on people who desired to preserve all that was left of their good name, and to set a moral example to others. The parish must support it if nobody else would. It would be useless to attempt to trace them, or to advertise again. The baby's father had disappeared: they didn't know where; and could hold no communication now with such a monster of wickedness, even if they did. She was dead in her shame and her sin; and her name should never be mentioned among them she belonged to, henceforth for ever.'

"This was what I remember in the letter, sir. A shocking and unchristian letter, I said; and the clergyman he said so, too."

"She was buried in the poor corner of the churchyard. They marked out the place, in case anybody should ever want to see it, by cutting the two letters M. G., and the date of when she died, upon a board of wood at the head of the grave. The clergyman then give me the hair bracelet and the handkerchief; and said, 'You keep these as careful as you keep the child, for they may be of great importance one of these days. I shall seal up the letter, (which is addressed to me) and put in my strong box.' He'd asked me, before this, if I'd thought of what a responsibility it was for such as me to provide for the baby. And I told him I'd promised, and would keep my promise, and trust to God's providence for the rest. The clergyman was a very kind gentleman, and got up a subscription for the poor babe; and Peggy Burke, when she had her benefit before the circus left Bangbury, give half of what she got as *her* subscription. I never heard nothing about the child's friends from that time to this; and I know no more who its father is now than I did then. And glad I am that he's never come forward—though, perhaps, I oughtn't to say so. I keep the hair bracelet and the handkerchief as careful as the clergyman told me, for the mother's sake as well as the child's. I've known some sorrow with her since I took her as my own: but I love her only the dearer for it, and still think the day a happy day for both of us, when I first stopped and suckled her by the roadside."

"This is all I have to say, if you please, sir, about how I first met with little Mary; and I wish I could have told it in a way that was more fit for such as you to hear."

As the clown's wife ended her narrative, but little was said in the way of comment on it, by those who had listened to her. They were too much affected by what they had heard, to speak, as yet, except briefly and in low voices. Mrs. Joyce more than once raised her handkerchief to her eyes. Her husband murmured some cordial words of sympathy and thanks—in an unusually subdued manner, however. Valentine said nothing; but he drew his chair close to Mrs. Peckover, and turning his face away as if he did not wish it to be seen, took her hand in one of his and patted it gently with the other. There was now perfect silence in the room for a few minutes. Then they all looked out with one accord, and as it seemed with one feeling, toward the garden.

In a shady place, just visible among the trees, the rector's daughters, and little Mary, and the great Newfoundland dog, were all sitting together on the grass. The two young ladies appeared to be fastening a garland of flowers round the child's neck, while she was playfully offering a nosegay for Leo to smell at. The sight was homely and simple enough; but it was full of the tenderest interest—after the narrative which had just engaged them—to those who now witnessed it. They looked out on the garden scene silently for some little time. Mrs. Joyce was the first to speak again.

"Would it be asking too much of you, Mrs. Peckover," said she, "to inquire how the poor little thing really met with the accident that caused her misfortune? I know there is an account of it in the bills of the circus, but—"

"It's the most infamous and disgusting thing I ever read!" interrupted Mr. Blyth indignantly. "The man who wrote it ought to be put in the pillory. I never remember wanting to throw a rotten egg at any of my fellow-creatures before—but I feel certain that I should enjoy having a shy at Mr. Jubber!"

"Gently, Valentine—gently," interposed the rector. "I think, my love," he continued, turning to Mrs. Joyce, "that it is hardly considerate to Mrs. Peckover, to expect her to comply with your request. She has already sacrificed herself once to our curiosity; and, really, to ask her now to recur a second time to recollections which I am sure must distress her—"

"It's worse than distressing, indeed, sir, even to think of that dreadful accident," said Mrs. Peckover, "and specially as I can't help taking some blame to myself for it. But if the lady wishes to know how it happened, I'm sure I'm agreeable to tel

her. People in our way of life, ma'am—as I have often heard Peggy Burke say—are obliged to dry the tear at their eyes, long before it's gone from their hearts. But pray don't think, sir, I mean that now, about myself, and in your company. If I do feel low at talking of little Mary's misfortune, I can take a look out into the garden there, and see how happy she is—and that's safe to see, me right again."

"I ought to tell you first, sir," proceeded the clown's wife, after waiting thoughtfully for a moment or two before she spoke again. "that I got on much better with little Mary than ever I thought I should, for the first six years of her life. She grew up so pretty, that gentlefolks was always noticing her, and asking about her; and nearly in every place the circus went to they made her presents, which helped nicely in her keep and clothing. And our own people too, petted her and were fond of her. Ah those six years we got on as pleasantly as could be; it was not till she was near her seventh birthday, that I was wicked and foolish enough to consent to her being snown in the performances.

"I was sorely tried and tempted before I did consent. Jubber first said he wanted her to perform with the riders, and I said 'No,' at once—though I was awful frightened of him in those days. But soon after Jemmy (who wasn't the clown then that he is now, sir; there was others to be got for his money, to do what he did at that time)—Jemmy comes to me, saying he's afraid he shall lose his place, if I don't give in about Mary. This staggered me a good deal; for I don't know what we should have done then, if my husband had lost his engagement. And, besides that, there was the poor dear child herself, who was mad to be carried up in the air on horseback; always begging and praying to be made a little rider of. And all the rest of 'em in the circus worried and laughed at me; and, in short, I give in at last against my conscience, but I couldn't help it.

"I made a bargain though, that she should only be trusted to the steadiest, soberest man, and the best rider of the whole lot. They called him 'Muley' in the bills, and stained his face to make him look like a Turk, or something of that sort; but his real name was Francis Yapp, and a very good fatherly sort of a man he was in his way, having a family of his own to look after. He used to ride splendid, at full straddle, with three horses under him—one foot, you know, sir, being on the outer horse's back, and one foot on the inner. Him and Jubber made it out together that he was to act a wild man, flying for his life across some desert, with his only child, and poor little Mary was to be the child. They darkened her face to look like his;

and put an outlandish kind of white dress on her; and buckled a red belt round her waist, with a sort of handle in it for Yapp to hold her by. After first making believe in all sort of ways, that him and his child was in danger of being taken and shot, he had to make believe afterward that they had escaped—and to hold her up, in a sort of triumph at the full stretch of his arm—galloping round and round the ring all the while. He was a tremendous strong man, and could do it as easy as I could hold up a bit of that plum-cake.

"Poor little love! she soon got over the first fright of the thing, and had a sort of mad fondness for it that I never liked to see, for it wasn't natural to her. Yapp he said, she'd got the heart of a lion, and would grow up the finest woman-rider in the world. I was very unhappy about it, and lived a miserable life, always fearing some accident. But for some time, nothing near an accident happened; and lots of money came into the circus to see Yapp and little Mary—but that was Jubber's luck and not ours. One night—she was a little better than seven year old—

"Oh, ma'am, how I ever lived over that dreadful night I don't know! I was a sinful miserable wretch not to have starved sooner than let the child go into danger; but I was so sorely tempted and driven to it, God knows!—No, sir! no, ma'am; and many thanks for your kindness, I'll go on now I've begun. Don't mind me crying: I'll manage to tell it somehow. The strap—no, I mean the handle; the handle in the strap give way all of a sudden—just at the last too! just at the worst time, when he couldn't catch her!—

"Never—oh, never, never, to my dying day shall I forget the horrible screech that went up from the whole audience; and the sight of the white thing lying huddled dead—still on the boards! We hadn't such a number in as usual that night, and she fell on an empty place between the benches. I got knocked down by the horses in running to her—I was clean out of my senses, and didn't know where I was going—Yapp had fallen among them, and hurt himself badly trying to catch her—they were running wild in the ring—the horses was—frantic-like with the noise all round them. I got up somehow, and a crowd of people jostled me, and I saw my innocent darling carried among them. I felt hands on me, trying to pull me back; but I broke away, and got into the waiting-room along with the rest.

"There she was—my own, own little Mary, that I'd promised her poor mother to take care of—there she was, lying all white and still on an old box, with my cloak rolled up as a pillow for her. And people crowding round her. And a docto



feeling her head all over. And Yapp among them, held up by two men, with his face all over blood. I wasn't able to speak or move; I didn't feel as if I was breathing even, till the doctor stopped, and looked up; and then a great shudder went through all of us together, as if we'd been one body, instead of twenty or more.

"It's not killed her," says the doctor. "Her brain's escaped injury."

"I didn't hear another word."

"I don't know how long it was before I seemed to wake up like, with a dreadful feeling of pain and tearing of everything inside me. I was on the landlady's bed, and Jemmy was standing over me with a bottle of salts. 'They've put her to bed,' he says to me, 'and the doctor's setting her arm.' I didn't recollect at first; but when I did, it was almost as bad as seeing the dreadful accident all over again.

"It was some time before any of us found out what had really happened. The breaking of her arm, the doctor said, had saved her head, which was only cut and bruised a little, not half as bad as was feared. Day after day, and night after night, I sat by her bedside, comforting her through her fever, and the pain of the splints on her arm, and never once suspecting—no more I believe than she did—the awful misfortune that had really happened. She was always wonderful quiet and silent for a child, poor lamb, in little illnesses that she'd had before; and, somehow, I didn't wonder—at least, at first—why she never said a word, and never answered me when I spoke to her.

"This went on, though, after she got better in her health, and a strange look came over her eyes. They seemed to be always wondering, and frightened in a confused way about something or other. She took, too, to rolling her head about restlessly from one side of the pillow to the other; making a sort of muttering and humming now and then, but still never seeming to notice or to care for anything I said to her. One day, I was warming her a nice cup of beef-tea over the fire, when I heard, quite sudden and quite plain, these words from where she lay on the bed—'Why are you always so quiet here? Why doesn't somebody speak to me?'

"I knew there wasn't another soul in the room but the poor child at that time; and yet, the voice as spoke those words was no more like little Mary's voice, than my voice, sir, is like yours. It sounded, somehow, hoarse and low, and deep and faint, all at the same time; the strangest, shockiest voice to come from a child, who always used to speak so clearly and prettily before, that ever I heard. If I was only cleverer with my words, ma'am, and could tell you about it properly—but I can't. I

only know it gave me such a turn to hear her, that I upset the beef-tea and ran back in fright to the bed. 'Why, Mary! Mary!'" says I, quite loud, 'are you so well already that you're trying to imitate Mr. Jubber's gruff voice?'

"There was the same wondering look in her eyes—only wilder than I had ever seen it yet—while I was speaking. When I'd done, she says in the same strange way, 'Speak out, mother; I can't hear you when you whisper like that.' She was as long saying these words, and bungled over them as much, as if she was only just learning to speak. I think I got the first suspicion then, of what had really happened. 'Mary!' I bawled out as loud as I could, 'Mary! can't you hear me now?' She shook her head, and stared up at me with the frightened bewildered look again; then seemed to get pettish and impatient all of a sudden—the first time I ever saw her so—and hid her face from me on the pillow.

"Just then the doctor come in. 'Oh, sir!' says I, whispering to him—just as if I hadn't found out a minute ago that she couldn't hear me at the top of my voice—'I'm afraid there's something gone wrong with her hearing.' 'Have you only just now suspected that?' says he; 'I've been afraid of it for some days past, but I thought it best to say nothing till I'd tried her; and she's hardly well enough yet, poor child, to be worried with experiments on her ears. 'She's much better,' says I; 'indeed, she's much better to-day, sir! Oh, do try her now, for it's so dreadful to be in doubt a moment longer than we can help.'

"He went up to the bedside, and I followed him. She was lying with her face hidden away from us on the pillow, just as it was when I left her. The doctor says to me, 'Don't disturb her, don't let her look round, so that she can see us—I'm going to call to her.' And he called 'Mary' out loud, twice; and she never moved. The third time he tried her, it was with such a shout at the top of his voice, that the landlady come up, thinking something had happened. I was looking over his shoulder, and saw that my dear child never started in the least. 'Poor little thing,' says the doctor, quite sorrowful, 'this is worse than I expected.' He stooped down and touched her, as he said this; and she turned round directly, and put out her hand to have her pulse felt as usual. I tried to get out of her sight, for I was crying, and didn't wish her to see it; but she was too sharp for me. She looked hard in my face and the landlady's, then in the doctor's, which was downcast enough; for he had got very fond of her, just as everybody else did who saw much of little Mary.

"'What's the matter?' she says, in the same sort of strange unnatural voice again.

We tried to pacify her, but only made her worse. 'Why do you keep on whispering?' she asks. 'Why don't you speak out loud, so that I can—' and then she stopped, seemingly in a sort of helpless fright and bewilderment. She tried to get up in bed, and her face turned red all over. 'Can she read writing?' says the doctor. 'Oh, yes, sir,' says I; 'she can read and write beautifully for a child of her age; my husband taught her.' 'Get me paper, and pen and ink directly,' says he to the landlady; who went at once and got him what he wanted.

'We must quiet her at all hazards,' says the doctor, 'or she'll excite herself into another attack of fever. She feels what's the matter with her, but don't understand it; and I'm going to tell her by means of this paper. It's a risk,' he says, writing down on the paper in large letters, *You are deaf*; 'but I must try all I can do for her ears immediately; and this will prepare her,' says he, going to the bed, and holding the paper before her eyes.

'She shrank back on the pillow, as still as death the instant she saw it; but didn't cry, and looked more puzzled and astonished, I should say, than distressed. But she was breathing dreadful quick—I felt that, as I stooped down and kissed her. 'She's too young,' says the doctor, 'to know what the extent of her calamity really is. You stop here and keep her quiet till I come back, for I trust the case is not hopeless yet.' 'But whatever has made her deaf, sir?' says the landlady, opening the door for him. 'The shock of that fall in the circus,' says he, going out in a very great hurry. 'I thought I should never have held up my head again, as I heard them words, looking at little Mary, with my arm round her neck all the time.'

'Well, sir, the doctor come back; and he syringed her ears first—and that did no good. Then he tried blistering, and then he put on leeches; and still it was no use. 'I'm afraid it is a hopeless case,' says he; 'but there's a doctor who's had more practice than I've had with deaf people, who comes from where he lives to our dispensary once a week. To-morrow's his day, and I'll bring him here with me.'

'And he did bring this gentleman, as he promised he would—an old gentleman, with such a pleasant way of speaking, that I understood everything he said to me directly. 'I'm afraid you must make up your mind to the worst,' says he. 'I have been hearing about the poor child from my friend who's attended her; and I'm sorry to say I don't think there's much hope.' Then he goes to the bed and looks at her. 'Ah,' says he, 'there's just the same expression in her face that I remember seeing in a mason's boy—a patient of mine—who fell off a ladder, and lost his hearing altogether

by the shock. You don't hear what I'm saying, do you, my dear?' says he in a hearty cheerful way. 'You don't hear me saying that you're the prettiest little girl I ever saw in my life?' She looked up at him confused, and quite silent. He didn't speak to her again, but told me to turn her on the bed, so that he could get at one of her ears.

'He pulled out some instruments, while I did what he asked, and put them into her ear, but so tenderly that he never hurt her. Then he looked in, through a sort of queer spy-glass thing. Then he did it all over again with the other ear; and then he laid down the instruments and pulled out his watch. 'Write on a piece of paper,' says he to the other doctor: '*Do you know that the watch is ticking?*' When this was done, he makes signs to little Mary to open her mouth, and puts as much of his watch in as would go between her teeth, while the other doctor holds up the paper before her. When he took the watch out again, she shook her head, and said, 'No,' just in the same strange voice as ever. The old gentleman didn't speak a word as he put the watch back in his fob; but I saw by his face that he thought it was all over with her hearing, after what had just happened.

'Oh, try and do something for her, sir!' says I. 'Oh, for God's sake, don't give her up, sir!' 'My good soul,' says he, 'You must set her an example of cheerfulness, and keep up her spirits—that's all that can be done for her now.' 'Not all, sir,' says I, 'surely not all!' 'Indeed it is,' says he; 'her hearing's completely gone; the experiment with my watch proves it. I had an exactly similar case with the mason's boy,' he says, turning to the other doctor. 'The shock of that fall has, I believe, paralyzed the auditory nerve in her, as it did in him.' I remember those words exactly, sir, though I didn't quite understand them at the time. But he explained himself to me very kindly; telling me over again, in a plain way, what he'd just told the doctor. He reminded me, too, that the remedies which had been already tried had been of no use; and told me I might feel sure that any others would only end in the same way, and put her to useless pain into the bargain. 'I hope,' says he, 'the poor child is too young to suffer much mental misery under her dreadful misfortune. Keep her amused, and keep her talking, if you possibly can—though I doubt very much whether, in a little time, you won't fail completely in getting her to speak at all.'

'Don't say that, sir,' says I; 'don't say she'll be dumb as well as deaf; it's enough to break one's heart only to think of it.' 'But I must say so,' says he; 'for I'm afraid it's the truth.' And then he asked me whether I hadn't noticed already that



she was unwilling to speak; and that, when she did speak, her voice wasn't the same voice it used to be. I said 'Yes' to that; and asked him whether the fall had had anything to do with it. He said, taking me up very short, it had everything to do with it, because the fall had made her what they call stone-deaf, which prevented her from hearing the sound of her own voice. So it was changed, he told me, because she had no ear now to guide herself by in speaking, and couldn't know in the least whether the few words she said were spoken soft or loud, or deep or clear. 'So far as the poor child herself is concerned,' says he, 'she might as well be without a voice at all; for she has nothing but her memory left to tell her that she has one.'

"I burst out a-crying as he said this; for somehow I'd never thought of anything so dreadful before. 'I've been a little too sudden in telling you the worst, haven't I?' says the old gentleman, kindly; 'but you must be taught how to make up your mind to meet the full extent of this misfortune for the sake of the child, whose future comfort and happiness depend greatly on you.' And then he bid me keep up her reading and writing, and force her to use her voice as much as I could, by every means in my power. He told me I should find her grow more and more unwilling to speak every day, just for the shocking reason that she couldn't hear a single word she said, or a single tone of her own voice. He warned me that she was already losing the wish and the want to speak; and that it would very soon be little short of absolute pain to her to be made to say even a few words; but he begged and prayed me not to let my good-nature get the better of my prudence on that account, and not to humor her, however I might feel tempted to do so—for if I did, she would be dumb as well as deaf most certainly. He told me my own common sense would show me the reason why; but I suppose I was too distressed or too stupid to understand things as I ought. He had to explain it to me in so many words, that if she wasn't constantly exercised in speaking, she would lose her power of speech altogether, for want of practice—just the same as if she'd been born dumb. 'So, once again,' says he, 'mind you make her use her voice. Don't give her her dinner, unless she asks for it. Treat her severely in that way, poor little soul, because it's for her own good.'

"It was all very well for *him* to say that, but it was impossible for *me* to do it. The dear child, ma'am, seemed to get used to her misfortune, except when we tried to make her speak. It was 'he saddest, prettiest sight in the world to see how patiently and bravely she bore with her hard lot from the first. As she grew better in

her health, she kept up her reading, and writing quite cleverly with my husband and me; and all her nice, natural, cheerful ways come back to her just the same as ever. I've read or heard somewhere, sir, about God's goodness in tempering the wind to the shorn lamb. I don't know who said that first; but it might well have been spoken on account of my own darling little Mary, in those days. Instead of us being the first to comfort her, it was she that was first to comfort us. And so she's gone on ever since—bless her heart! Only treat her kindly, and, in spite of her misfortune, she's the merriest, ampest little thing, the easiest pleased and amused, I do believe, that ever lived.

"If we were wrong in not forcing her to speak more than we did, I must say this much for me and my husband, that we hadn't the heart to make her miserable and keep on tormenting her from morning to night, when she was always happy and comfortable if we would only let her alone. We tried our best for some time to do what the gentleman told us; but it's so hard, as you've found I dare say, ma'am, not to end by humoring them you love! I never see the tear in her eye, except when we forced her to speak to us; and then she always cried, and was fretful and out of sorts for the whole day. It seemed such a dreadful difficulty and pain to her to say only two or three words; and the shocking husky moaning voice that sounded somehow as if it didn't belong to her never changed. My husband first gave up worrying her to speak. He practised her with her book and writing, but let her have her own will in everything else; and he taught her all sorts of tricks on the cards for amusement, which was a good way of keeping her going with her reading and her pen pleasantly, by reason, of course, of him and her being obliged to put down everything they had to say to each other on a little slate that we bought for her after she got well.

"It was Mary's own notion, if you please, ma'am, to have the slate always hanging at her side. Poor dear! she thought it quite a splendid ornament, and was as proud of it as could be. Jemmy, being neat-handed at such things, did the frame over for her prettily with red morocco, and got our property-man to do it all round with a bright golden border. And then we hung it at her side, with a nice little bit of silk-cord—just as you see it now.

"I held out in making her speak some time after my husband; but at last I give in too. I know it was wrong and selfish of me; but I got a fear that she wouldn't like me as well as she used to do, and would take more kindly to Jemmy than to me, if I went on. Oh, how happy she was

the first day I wrote down on her slate that I wouldn't worry her about speaking any more! She jumped up on my knees—being always as nimble as a squirrel—and kissed me over and over again with all her heart. For the rest of the day she run about the room, and all over the house, like a mad thing, and when Jemmy come home at night from performing, she would get out of bed and rump with him, and ride pickaback on him, and try and imitate the funny faces she'd seen him make in the ring. I do believe, sir, that was the first regular happy night we had all had together, since the dreadful time when she met with her accident.

"Long after that, my conscience was uneasy though, at times, about giving in as I had. At last I got a chance of speaking to another doctor about little Mary; and he told me that if we had kept her up in her speaking ever so severely, it would still have been a pain and a difficulty to her to say her words, to her dying day. He said too that he felt sure—though he could not explain it to me—that people afflicted with such stone-deafness as hers didn't feel the loss of speech, because they never had the want to use their speech; and that they took to making signs, and writing, and such like, quite kindly as a sort of second nature to them. This comforted me, and settled my mind a good deal. I hope in God what the gentleman said was true; for if I was in fault in letting her have her own way and be happy, it's past mending by this time. For more than two years, ma'am, I've never heard her say a single word, no more than if she'd been born dumb, and it's my belief that all the doctors in the world couldn't make her speak now.

"Perhaps, sir, you might wish to know how she first come to show her tricks on the cards in the circus. There was no danger in her doing that, I know—and yet I'd have given almost everything I have not to let her be shown about as she is. But I was threatened again in the vilest, wickedest way—I hardly know how to tell it, gentlemen, in the presence of such as you; Jubber, you must know—"

Just as Mrs. Peckover, with very painful hesitation, pronounced the last words, the half-clock of the rectory struck two. She heard it, and stopped instantly.

"Oh, if you please, sir, was that two o'clock?" she asked, starting up with a look of alarm.

"Yes, Mrs. Peckover," said the rector; "but really after having been indebted to you for so much that has deeply interested and afflicted us, we can't possibly think of letting you and little Mary leave the rectory yet."

"Indeed we must, sir; and many thanks to you for wanting to keep us longer," said

Mrs. Peckover. "What I was going to say isn't much; it's quite as well you shouldn't hear it; and indeed, indeed, ma'am, we must go directly. I told this gentleman here, Mr. Blyth, when I come in, that I'd stolen to you unawares, under pretence of taking little Mary out for a walk. If we are not back to the two o'clock dinner in the circus, it's unknown what Jubber may not do. He's the cruellest tyrant; this gentleman will tell you how infamously he treated the poor child last night; we must go, sir, for her sake, or else—"

"Stop!" cried Valentine, all his suppressed excitability bursting bounds in an instant, as he took Mrs. Peckover by the arm and pressed her back into the chair "Stop!—hear me; I must speak—it's no use shaking your head and frowning at me, doctor—I must speak, or I shall go out of my senses! Don't interrupt me, Mrs. Peckover; you shan't get up—no, you good, excellent, kind-hearted soul, you shan't get up! Look here; you must never take that little angel of a child near Jubber again—no, never! By heavens! if I thought he was likely to touch her any more, I should go mad, and murder him!—Let me alone, doctor! I beg Mrs. Joyce's pardon for behaving like this; I'll never do it again. Be quiet, all of you! I *must* take the child home with me—oh, Mrs. Peckover don't, don't say no! I'll make her as happy as the day is long. I've no child of my own: I'll watch over her, and love her, and teach her all my life. I've got a poor, suffering, bedridden wife at home, who would think such a companion as little Mary the greatest blessing God could send her. My own dear, patient Lavvie! Oh, doctor, doctor! think how kind Lavvie would be to that afflicted little child; and try if you can't make Mrs. Peckover consent. I can't speak any more—I know I'm wrong to burst out in this way; and I beg all your pardons for it, I do indeed! Speak to her, doctor—pray speak to her directly, if you don't want to make me miserable for the rest of my life!"

With these words, Valentine darted precipitately into the garden, and made straight for the spot where the little girls were still sitting together in their shady resting-place among the trees.

The clown's wife had sat very pale and very quiet, under the whole overwhelming torrent of Mr. Blyth's apostrophes, exclamations, and entreaties. She seemed quite unable to speak, after he was fairly gone; and only looked round in a very bewildered way at the rector, with fear as well as amazement expressed vividly in her hearty, healthy face.

"Pray compose yourself, Mrs. Peckover," said Doctor Joyce; "and kindly give me



your best attention to what I am about to say. Let me beg you, in the first place, to excuse Mr. Blyth's odd behavior, which I see has startled and astonished you. He has an unusually excitable nature, which makes him quite incapable of preserving his self-control whenever his feelings are greatly interested on any subject. But, however wildly he may talk, I assure you he means honorably and truthfully in all that he says. You will understand this better if you will let me temperately explain to you the proposal, which he has just made so abruptly and confusedly in his own words."

"Proposal, sir?" exclaimed Mrs. Peckover faintly, looking more frightened than ever—"Proposal! Oh, sir! you don't mean to say that you're going to ask me to part from little Mary?"

"I will ask you to do nothing that your own good sense and kind heart may not approve," answered the rector. "In plain terms then, and not to waste time by useless words of preface, my friend, Mr. Blyth, feels such admiration for your little Mary, and such a desire to help her as far as may be, in her great misfortune, that he is willing and eager to make her future prospects in life his own peculiar care, by adopting her as his daughter. This offer, though coming, as I am aware, from a perfect stranger, can hardly astonish you, I think, if you reflect on the unusually strong claims which the child has to the compassion and kindness of all her fellow-creatures. Other strangers, as you have told us, have shown the deepest interest in her on many occasions; it is not therefore at all wonderful that a gentleman, whose sensitively affectionate nature, and whose Christian integrity of motive I have had ample opportunities of testing during a friendship of nearly twenty years, should prove the sincerity of his admiration for the poor child, and his anxiety to promote her future welfare, by such a proposal as I have now communicated to you."

"Don't ask me to say yes to it, sir!" pleaded Mrs. Peckover with the tears in her eyes. "Don't ask me to do that! Anything else to prove my gratitude for your kindness to us; but how can I part from my own little Mary? You can't have the heart to ask that of me?"

"I have the heart, Mrs. Peckover, to feel deeply for your distress at the idea of parting from the child; but, for her sake, I must again ask you to control your feelings. And, more than that, I must appeal to you by your love to her, to grant a fair hearing to the petition which I now make on Mr. Blyth's behalf."

"I would, indeed, if I could, sir—but it's just because I love her so that I can't! Besides, as you yourself said, he's a perfect stranger."

"I readily admit the force of that objection on your part, Mrs. Peckover; but let me remind you, that I vouch for the uprightness of his character, and his fitness to be trusted with the child, after twenty years experience of him. You may answer to that, that I am a stranger too; and I can only ask you, in return, frankly to accept my character and position as the best proofs I can offer you that I am not unworthy of your confidence. If you place little Mary for instruction (as you well might) in an asylum for the deaf and dumb, you would be obliged to put implicit trust in the authorities of that asylum, on much the same grounds as those I now advance to justify you in putting trust in me."

"Oh, sir! don't think—pray don't think I am unwilling to trust you—so kind and good as you have been to us to-day—and a clergyman too—I should be ashamed of myself, and my ingratitude, if I could doubt—"

"Let me tell you, plainly and candidly, what advantages for the child Mr. Blyth's proposal holds out. He has no family of his own, and his wife, poor lady is, as he has hinted to you, an invalid for life. If you could only see the gentleness and sweet patience with which she bears her affliction, you would acknowledge that little Mary could appeal for an affectionate welcome to no kinder heart than Mrs. Blyth's. I assure you most seriously, that the only danger I should fear for the child in my friend's house, would be that she would be spoiled by excessive indulgence. Though by no means a rich man, Mr. Blyth is in an independent position, and can offer her all the comforts of life. In one word the home to which he is ready to take her, is a home of love and happiness and security, in the best and purest meaning of those words."

"Don't say any more, sir! Don't break my heart by making me part with her!"

"You will live, Mrs. Peckover, to thank me for trying your fortune as I try it now. Hear me a little longer, while I tell you what terms Mr. Blyth proposes. He is not only willing but anxious—if you give the child into his charge—that you should have access to her whenever you like. He will leave his address in London with you. He desires, from motives alike honorable to you and to himself, to defray your travelling expenses whenever you wish to see the child. He will always acknowledge your prior right to her affection and her duty. He will offer her every facility in his power for constantly corresponding with you; and if the life she leads in his house be, even in the slightest respect, distasteful to her, he pledges himself to give her up to you again—if you and she desire it—at any sacrifice of his own wishes and his own feelings. These are the terms he proposes."

and I can most solemnly assure you, on my honor as a clergyman and a gentleman, that he will hold sacred the strict performance of all and each of these conditions, exactly as I have stated them."

"I ought to let her go, sir—I know I ought to show how grateful I am for Mr. Blyth's generosity by letting her go—but how can I, after all the long time she's been like my own child to me? Oh, ma'am, say a word for me!—I seem so selfish for not giving her up—say a word for me!"

"Will you let me say a word for little Mary instead?" rejoined Mrs. Joyce. "Will you let me remind you that Mr. Blyth's proposal offers her a secure protection against that inhuman wretch of a man who has ill-used her already, and may often ill-use her again, in spite of everything you can do to prevent him. Pray think of that, Mrs. Peckover—pray do!"

Poor Mrs. Peckover showed that she thought of it bitterly enough, by a fresh burst of tears.

The rector poured out a glass of water, and gave it to her. "Do not think us inconsiderate or unfeeling," he said, "in pressing Mr. Blyth's offer on you so perseveringly as we do. We sincerely think it our duty to act thus on Mary's account, for the sake of her future interests. Only reflect on her position, if she remains in the circus as she grows up! Would all your watchful and admirable kindness be sufficient to

shield her then against dangers to which I hardly dare allude?—against wickedness which would take advantage of her defencelessness, her innocence, and even her misfortune? Consider all that Mr. Blyth's proposal promises for her future life; for the sacred preservation of her purity of heart and mind. Look forward to the day when little Mary will have grown up to be a young woman: and I will answer, Mrs. Peckover, for your doing full justice to the importance of my friend's offer."

"I know it's all true, sir: I know I'm an ungrateful selfish wretch—but only give me a little time to think; a little time longer to be with the poor darling that I love like my own child!"

Doctor Joyce was still drawing his chair closer to Mrs. Peckover before he answered, when the door opened and the respectable Vance softly entered the room.

"What do you want here?" said the rector, a little irritably. "Didn't I tell you not to come in again till I rang for you?"

"I beg your pardon, sir," answered Vance, casting rather a malicious look at the clown's wife as he closed the door behind him—"but there's a person waiting in the hall, who says he comes on important business, and must see you directly."

"Who is he? What's his name?"

"He says his name is Jubber, if you please, sir."

Mrs. Peckover started from her chair with a scream. "Don't—pray, for mercy's sake, sir, don't let him into the garden where Mary is!" she gasped, clutching Doctor Joyce by the arm in the extremity of her terror. "He's found us out, and come here in one of his dreadful passions. I know it! He cares for nothing and for nobody, sir: he's bad enough to ill treat her even before you. O! what am I to do? oh, good gracious heavens! what am I to do?"

"Leave everything to me, and sit down again," said the rector kindly. Then, turning to Vance, he added: "Show Mr. Jubber into the cloak-room, and say I will be with him directly."

"Now, Mrs. Peckover," continued Doctor Joyce in the most perfectly composed manner, "before I see this man (whose business I can guess at) I have three important questions to ask of you. In the first place, were you not a witness last night, of his cruel ill-usage of that poor child? (Mr. Blyth told me of it.) The fellow actually beat her, did he not?"

"Oh, indeed he did, sir!—beat her most cruelly with a cane."

"And you saw it all yourself?"

"I did, sir. He'd have used her worse, if I hadn't been by to prevent him."

"Very well. Now tell me if you or your husband have signed any agreement—any papers, I mean, giving this man a right to claim the child as one of his performers?"

"Me sign an agreement, sir! I never did such a thing in all my life. Jubber would think himself insulted, if you only talked of his signing an agreement about a child, with such as me or Jemmy."

"Better and better. Now, my third question refers to little Mary herself. I will undertake to put it out of this blackguard's power ever to lay a finger on her again—but I can only do so on one condition, which it rests entirely with you to grant."

"I'll do anything to save her, sir, I will, indeed."

"The condition is that you consent to Mr. Blyth's proposal; for I can only insure the child's safety thoroughly on those terms."

"Then, sir, I consent to it," said Mrs. Peckover, speaking with a sudden firmness of tone and manner which almost startled Mrs. Joyce, who stood by listening anxiously. "I consent to it; for I should be the vilest wretch in the world, if I could say 'no' at such a time as this. I will trust my precious darling treasure to you, sir, and to Mr. Blyth from this moment. God bless her, and comfort me! for I want comfort badly enough. Oh, Mary! Mary! my own little Mary! to think of you and me ever being parted like this?" The poor woman



turned toward the garden as she pronounced these words; all her fortitude forsook her in an instant; and she sank back in her chair, sobbing bitterly.

"Take her out into the shrubbery where the children are, as soon as she recovers a little," whispered the rector to his wife, as he opened the dining-room door.

Though Mr. Jubber presented, to all appearance, the most scoundrelly aspect that humanity can assume, when he was clothed in his evening uniform, and illuminated by his own circus lamplight, he nevertheless reached an infinitely loftier climax of blackguard perfection, when he was arrayed in his private costume, and was submitted to the tremendous ordeal of pure daylight. The most monstrous ape that could be picked from the cages of the Zoological Gardens would have gained by comparison with him as he now appeared, standing in the rectory cloak-room, with his debauched bloodshot eyes staring grimly contemptuous all about him, with his yellow flabby throat exposed by a turn-down collar and a light blue neck-tie, with the rouge still smeared over his gross unhealthy cheeks, with his mangy shirt-front bespattered with bad embroidery, and false jewelry that had not even the politic decency to keep itself clean. He had his hat on, and was sulkily running his dirty fingers through the greasy black ringlets that flowed over his coat-collars, when Doctor Joyce entered the cloak-room.

"You wished to speak with me?" said the rector, not sitting down himself, and not asking Mr. Jubber to sit down.

"Oh! you're Doctor Joyce?" said the fellow, assuming his most insolent familiarity of manner directly.

"That is my name," said Dr. Joyce, very quietly. "Will you have the goodness to state your business with me immediately, and in the fewest possible words?"

"Halloo! You take that tone with me, do you?" said Jubber, setting his arms akimbo, and tapping his foot fiercely on the floor: "you're trying to come Tommy Grand over me already, are you? very good! I'm the man to give you change in your own coin—so here goes! What do you mean by enticing away my mysterious foundling? What do you mean by this private swindle of talent that belongs to my circus?"

"You had better proceed a little," said the rector, more quietly than before. "Thus far, I understand nothing whatever, except that you wish to behave offensively to me; which, in a person of your appearance, is, I assure you, of not the slightest consequence. You had much better save time by stating what you have to say in plain words."

"You want plain words, eh?" cried Jubber, losing his temper. "Then, by

God, you shall have them, and plain enough!"

"Stop a minute," said Doctor Joyce. "If you use oaths in my presence again, I shall ring for my servant, and order him to show you out of the house."

"You will?"

"I will most certainly."

There was a moment's pause; and the blackguard and the gentleman looked one another straight in the face. It was the old, invariable struggle, between the quiet firmness of good breeding and the savage obstinacy of bad; and it ended in the old, invariable way. The blackguard flinched first.

"If your servant lays a finger on me, I'll thrash him within an inch of his life," said Jubber, looking toward the door, and scowling as he looked. "But that's not the point just now: the point is, that I charge you with getting my deaf and dumb girl into your house, to perform before you, of course on the sly. If you're too virtuous to come to my circus—and better than you have been there—you ought to have sent to me, and paid the proper price for a private performance. What do you mean by treating a public servant, like me, with your infernal, aristocratic looks, as if I was dirt under your feet, after such shabby doings as you've been guilty of—eh?"

"May I ask how you know that the child you refer to has been at my house to-day?" asked Doctor Joyce, without taking the slightest notice of Mr. Jubber's indignation.

"One of my people saw that swindling hypocrite of a Peckover taking her in, and told me of it when I missed them at dinner. There! that's good evidence I rather think! Deny it if you can."

"I have not the slightest intention of denying it. The child is now in my house."

"And has gone through all her performances, of course? Ah! shabby, shabby! I should be ashamed of myself if I'd tried to do a man out of his rights like that."

"I am most unaffectedly rejoiced to hear that you are capable, under any circumstances, of being ashamed of yourself at all," rejoined the rector. "The child, however, has gone through no performances here, not having been sent for with any such purpose as you suppose. But, as you said just now, that's not the point. Pray, why did you speak of the little girl, a moment ago, as *your* child?"

"Because she's one of my performers, of course. But, come—I've had enough of this; I can't stop talking here all day; I want the child; so just deliver her up at once, will you? and turn out Peck as soon as you like after. I'll cure them both of ever doing this sort of thing again! I'll make them stick tight to the circus for the future! I'll show them—"

"You would be employing your time much more usefully, if you occupied it in altering the bills of your performance so as to inform the public that the deaf and dumb child will not appear before them again."

"Not appear again? not appear to-night in my circus? Why, hang me, if I don't think you're trying to be funny all of a sudden! Alter my bills, eh? Not bad! Upon my soul, not at all bad for a parson! Give us another joke, sir, I'm all attention." And Mr. Jubber put his hand to his ear, grinning in a perfect fury of sarcasm.

"I'm quite in earnest," said the rector. "A friend of mine has adopted the child, and will take her home with him to-morrow morning. Mrs. Peckover (the only person who has any right to exercise control over her) has consented to this arrangement. If your business here was to take the child back to your circus, it is right to inform you that she will not leave my house till she goes to London to-morrow with my friend."

"And you think I'm the sort of man to stand this? and give up the child? and alter the bills? and lose money? and be as mild as mother's milk all the time? Oh, yes, of course! I'm so devilish fond of you and your friend! You're such nice men, you can make me do anything! D—n and b—t all this jabber and nonsense," roared the ruffian, passing suddenly from insolence to fury, and striking his fist on the table. "Give me the child at once, do you hear? Give her up, I say; I won't leave the house till I've got her!"

Just as Mr. Jubber swore for the second time, Doctor Joyce rang the bell. "I told you what I should do, if you used oaths in my presence again," said the rector.

"And I told you I'd kill the servant if he laid a finger on me," said Jubber, knocking his hat firmly on his head, and tucking up his cuffs.

Vance appeared at the door, much less pompous than usual, and displaying an interesting paleness of complexion. Jubber spat slightly into the palm of each of his hands, and clenched his fists.

"Have you done dinner down stairs?" asked Doctor Joyce, reddening a little, but still very quiet.

"Yes, sir," answered Vance, in a remarkably conciliating voice.

"Tell James to go to the constable, and say I want him; and let the gardener wait with you outside there in the hall."

"Now," said the rector, shutting the door again after issuing these orders, and placing himself once more face to face with Mr. Jubber, "Now I have a last word or two of warning to give you, which I recommend you to listen to quietly. In the first place, you have no right over the child

whatever: for I happen to know that you are without a signed agreement promising you her services. (You had better hear me out for your own sake.) You have no legal right, I say, to control the child in any manner; she is a perfectly free agent, so far as you are concerned—yes! yes! you deny it of course! I have only to say, that if you attempt to back that denial by still asserting your claim to her, and making a disturbance in my house, as sure as you stand there, I'll ruin you in Rubbleford and in all the country round. (It's no use laughing—I can do it!) You beat the child in the vilest manner last night. I am a magistrate; and I have my prosecutor, and my witness of the assault ready whenever I choose to call them. I can fine or imprison you, which I please. You know the public; you know what they think of people who ill-use helpless children. If you appeared in that character before me, the Rubbleford paper would report it; and, so far as the interests of your circus are concerned, you would be a ruined man in this part of the country—you would, you know it! Now, I will spare you this—not from any tenderness toward you—on condition that you take yourself off quietly, and never let us hear from you again. I strongly advise you to go at once; for if you wait till the constable comes, I will not answer for it that my sense of duty may not force me into giving you into custody." With which words, Doctor Joyce threw open the door, and pointed to the hall.

Throughout the delivery of this speech, violent indignation, ungovernable surprise, abject terror, and impotent rage, ravaged by turns the breast of Mr. Jubber. He stamped about the room, and uttered fragments of oaths; but did not otherwise interrupt Doctor Joyce, while that gentleman was speaking to him. When the rector had done, the fellow bad his insolent answer ready directly. To do him justice, he was consistent, if he was nothing else; he was bully and blackguard to the very last.

"Magistrate or parson," he cried, snapping his fingers, "I don't care a d—n for you in either capacity! You keep the child here at your peril! I'll go to the first lawyer in Rubbleford, and bring an action against you. I'll show you a little legal law! You ruin me indeed! I can prove that I only thrashed the little toad, the nasty deaf idiot, because she deserved it. I'll be even with you! I'll have the child back wherever you take her to. I'll show you a little legal law!" (Here he stepped to the hall door.) "I'll be even with you, damme! I'll charge you with setting on your menial servants to assault me." (Here he looked fiercely at the gardener, a freckled Scotch giant of six feet three, and instantly descended five steps.) "Lay a



finger on me, if you dare! I'm a free Englishman, and I'll have my rights and my legal law! I'll bring an action! I'll ruin you! I'll have her back, and beat her worse than ever when I get her! I'll—" Here he strutted into the front garden; his words grew indistinct, and his gross voice became gradually less and less audible. The coachman at the outer gate saw the last of him, and reported that he made his exit striking viciously at the flowers with his cane, and swearing that he would ruin the rector with "legal law."

After leaving certain directions with his servants, in the very improbable event of Mr. Jubber's return, Doctor Joyce repaired immediately to his dining-room. No one was there, so he went on into the garden.

Here he found the family and the visitors all assembled together; but a great change had passed over the whole party during his absence. Mr. Blyth, on being informed of the result of the rector's conversation with Mrs. Peckover, acted with his usual impetuosity and utter want of discretion; writing down delightedly on little Mary's slate, without the slightest previous preparation or coaxing, that she was to go home with him to-morrow, and be as happy as the day was long, all the rest of her life. The result of this incautious method of proceeding was that the child became excessively frightened, and ran away from everybody to take refuge with Mrs. Peckover. She was still crying, and holding tight by the good woman's gown with both hands, and Valentine was still loudly declaring to everybody that he loved her all the better for showing such faithful affection to her earliest and best friend, when the rector joined the party under the coolly-murmuring trees.

Doctor Joyce spoke but briefly of his interview with Mr. Jubber, concealing much that had passed at it, and making very light of the threats which the fellow had uttered on his departure. Mrs. Peckover, whose self-possession seemed in imminent danger of being overthrown by little Mary's mute demonstrations of affection, listened anxiously to every word the doctor uttered; and, as soon as he had done, said that she must go back to the circus directly, to tell her husband the truth about all that had occurred, as a necessary set-off against the slanders that were sure to be spoken against her by Mr. Jubber.

"Oh, never mind *me*, ma'am!" she said, in answer to the apprehensions expressed by Mrs. Joyce about her reception when she got back to the circus. "The dear child's safe; and that's all I care about—I'm big enough and strong enough to take my own part; and Jemmy he's always by to help me when I can't. May I come back,

if you please, sir, this evening; and say—and say—"

She would have added, "and say good-by;" but the thoughts which now gathered round that one word, made it too hard to utter. She silently courtesied her thanks for the warm invitation that was given her to return; stooped down to the child; and, kissing her, wrote on the slate, "I shall be back, dear, in the evening, at seven o'clock"—then disengaged the little hands that still held so fast by her gown, and hurried from the garden, without once venturing to look behind her as she crossed the sunny lawn.

Mrs. Joyce, and the young ladies, and the rector, all tried their best to console little Mary; and all failed. She resolutely, though very gently, resisted them; walking away into corners by herself, and looking constantly at her slate, as if she could only find comfort in reading the few words which Mrs. Peckover had written on it. At last, Mr. Blyth took her up on his knee. She struggled to get away, for a moment—then looked intently in his face; and, sighing very mournfully, laid her head down on his shoulder. There was a world of promise for the future success of Valentine's affectionate project in that simple action, and in the preference which it showed.

The day wore on quietly—evening came—seven o'clock struck—then half-past—then eight—and Mrs. Peckover never appeared. Doctor Joyce grew uneasy and sent Vance to the circus to get some news of her.

It was again Mr. Blyth, and Mr. Blyth only, who succeeded in partially quieting little Mary under the heavy disappointment of not seeing Mrs. Peckover at the appointed time. The child had been restless at first, and had wanted to go to the circus. Finding that they tenderly, but firmly, detained her at the rectory, she wept bitterly—wept so long that at last she fairly cried herself asleep in Valentine's arms. He sat anxiously supporting her with a patience that nothing could ure. The sunset rays, which he had at first carefully kept from falling on her face, vanished from the horizon; the quiet lustre of twilight overspread the sky, and still he refused to let her be taken from him; and said he would sit as he was all through the night rather than let her be disturbed.

Vance came back, and brought word that Mrs. Peckover would follow him in half an hour. They had given her some work to do at the circus, which she was obliged to finish before she could return to the rectory.

Having delivered this message, Vance next produced a hand-bill, which he said was being widely circulated all over Rubbleford; and which proved to be the composition of Mr. Jubber himself. That in-

genious ruffian, having doubtless discovered that "legal law" was powerless to help him to his revenge, and that it would be his wisest proceeding to keep clear of Doctor Joyce in the rector's magisterial capacity, was now artfully attempting to turn the loss of the child to his own profit, by dint of prompt and audacious lying in his favorite large type, sprinkled with red letters. He informed the public, through the medium of his hand-bills, that the father of the mysterious foundling had been "most providentially" discovered, and that he (Mr. Jubber) had given the child up immediately, without a thought of what he might personally suffer, in pocket as well as in mind, by the loss of one of the most "devotedly cherished" and attractive of his performers. After this, he appealed confidently to the sympathy of people of every degree, and "fond parents" especially, to compensate and console him by flocking in crowds to the circus—adding, that if additional stimulus were wanted to urge the public into "rallying round the ring," he was prepared to administer it forthwith, in the shape of the smallest dwarf in the world, for whose services he was then in treaty, and whose first appearance before a Rubbleford audience would take place, he hoped, in the course of a few days.

Such was Mr. Jubber's ingenious contrivance for turning to good pecuniary account the ignominious defeat which he had suffered at the hands of Dr. Joyce.

After much patient reasoning and many earnest expostulations, Mrs. Joyce at last succeeded in persuading Mr. Blyth that he might carry little Mary up-stairs to her bed, without any danger of awakening her. The moonbeams were streaming through the windows over the broad, old-fashioned landings of the rectory staircase, and bathed the child's sleeping face in their lovely light, as Valentine carefully bore her in his own arms to her bed-room. "Oh!" he whispered to himself, as he paused for an instant where the moon shone in clearest on the landing; and looked down on her—"oh! if my poor Lavvie could only see little Mary now!"

They laid her, still asleep, on the bed; and covered her over lightly with a shawl; then went down stairs again to wait for Mrs. Peckover.

The clown's wife came in half an hour, as she had promised. They saw much sorrow and weariness in her face, as they looked at her. Besides the bundle with the child's few clothes in it, which she carried with her, she brought the hair-bracelet and the pocket-handkerchief which had been found on little Mary's mother.

"Wherever the child goes," she said, "these two things must go with her." She addressed Mr. Blyth as she spoke, and gave

the hair-bracelet and the handkerchief into his own hands.

It seemed rather a relief than a disappointment to Mrs. Peckover to hear that the child was asleep above stairs. All pain of parting would now be spared, on one side at least. She went up to look at her on her bed; and kissed her, but so lightly that little Mary's sleep was undisturbed by that farewell token of tenderness and love.

"Tell her to write to me, sir," said poor Mrs. Peckover, holding Valentine's hand fast, and looking wistfully in his face through her gathering tears. "I shall prize my first letter from her so much, if it's only a couple of lines. God bless you, sir; and good-by! It ought to be a comfort to me, and it is, to know that you will be kind to her; I hope I shall get up to London some day, and see her myself. But don't forget the letter, sir, for I shan't fret so much after her when once I've got that!"

She went away, sadly murmuring these last words many times over, while Valentine was trying to cheer and reassure her, as they walked together to the outer gate. Doctor Joyce accompanied them down the front-garden path; and exacted from her a promise to return often to the rectory, while the circus was at Rubbleford; saying also that he and his family desired her to look on them always as her fast and firm friends in any emergency. Valentine entreated her, over and over again, to remember the terms of their agreement, and to come and judge for herself of the child's happiness in her new home. She only answered, "Don't forget the letter, sir!" And so they parted.

Early the next morning, Mr. Blyth and little Mary left the rectory, and started for London by the first coach.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### THE RESULT.

THE result of Mr. Blyth's adventure in the travelling circus, and of the story told by the clown's wife which followed it, was that little Mary at once became a member of the painter's family, and grew up happily, in her new home, into the beautiful young lady who was called "Madonna" by Valentine, by his wife, and by all intimate friends who were in the habit of frequenting the house.

Mr. Blyth's first proceeding, after he had brought the little girl home with him, was to take her to the most eminent aural surgeon of the day. He did this, not in the hope of any curative result following the medical examination, but as a first duty



which he thought he owed to her, now that she was under his sole charge. The surgeon was deeply interested in the case: but, after giving it the most careful attention, he declared that it was hopeless. Her sense of hearing, he said, was entirely gone; but her faculty of speech, although it had been totally disused (as Mrs. Peckover had stated) for more than two years past, might, he thought, be imperfectly regained, at some future time, if a tedious, painful, and uncertain process of education were resorted to, under the direction of an experienced teacher of the deaf and dumb. The child, however, had such a horror of this resource being tried, when it was communicated to her, that Mr. Blyth instinctively followed Mrs. Peckover's example, and consulted the little creature's feelings by allowing her in this particular—and indeed in most others—to remain perfectly happy and contented in her own way.

The first influence which reconciled her almost immediately to her new home, was the influence of Mrs. Blyth. The perfect gentleness and patience with which the painter's wife bore her incurable malady, seemed to impress the child in a very remarkable manner from the first. The sight of that frail, wasted life, which they told her, by writing, had been shut up so long in the same beautiful room, and had been condemned to the same weary inaction for so many, many years past—the look of that pale, tranquil face, which had gained back in beauty of expression so much of what it had lost in beauty of form—struck at once to Mary's heart, and filled her with one of those new mysterious sensations which mark epochs in the growth of a child's moral nature. Nor did these first impressions ever alter. When years had passed away, and when Mary, being "little" Mary no longer, possessed those marked characteristics of feature and expression which gained for her the name of "Madonna," she still preserved all her child's feelings for the painter's wife. However light and playful her manner might often be with Valentine, it invariably changed when she was in Mrs. Blyth's presence; always displaying, at such times, the same anxious tenderness, the same artless admiration, and the same watchful and loving sympathy. There was something secret and superstitious in the girl's fondness for Mrs. Blyth. She appeared unwilling to let others know what this affection really was in all its depths and fullness: it seemed to be intuitively preserved by her in the most sacred privacy of her own heart, as if the feeling had been part of her religion, or rather as if it had been a religion in itself.

The custom she followed in reading her prayers was alone enough to show that the essential nature of her first childish love

for the painter's wife remained unchanged in later years. When she entered her new home, they gave her a little book, with a prayer for the evening in it, which she was intrusted to read over to herself, kneeling at Mrs. Blyth's bedside. As she grew older and began to mature into womanhood, it was thought that she might prefer to be alone in her own room, while engaged in her mute and simple act of devotion. But the very first night she was sent there she came back weeping, and confessed, by her own language of signs in writing, that she dare not lie down to sleep, because when she read her prayers alone she could not feel the same faith in God's accepting them, which she always felt when she read them in Mrs. Blyth's presence. They tried to reason with her gently, but it was useless. Nothing quieted and consoled her, but permission to resume her old privilege: and from that time forth she still read her prayers, morning and evening, as she had read them when a child by Mrs. Blyth's bedside.

The girl's affection for her new mother, which testified itself thus strongly and sincerely in many other ways, was returned by that mother with equal fervor. From the day when little Mary first appeared at her bedside, Mrs. Blyth felt, to use her own expression, as if a new strength had been given her to enjoy the new happiness that was added to her life. Brighter hopes, better health, calmer resignation, and purer peace, seemed to follow the child's footsteps and be always inherent in her very presence, as she moved to and fro in the sick-room. All the little difficulties of communicating with her and teaching her, which her misfortune rendered inevitable, and which might sometimes have been felt as tedious by others, were so many distinct sources of happiness, so many exquisite occupations of once-weary time to Mrs. Blyth. Even those who had witnessed the poor lady's admirable patience and cheerfulness, from the first, in bearing with her hard lot, were now often astonished to find her, under the influence of little Mary's presence, even rivalling her husband's flow of good spirits, in her own gentle, feminine way. All the friends of the family declared that the child had succeeded where doctors, and medicines, and luxuries, and the sufferer's own courageous resignation had hitherto failed—for she had succeeded in endowing Mrs. Blyth with a new life. And they were right. A fresh object for the affections of the heart and the thoughts of the mind, is a fresh life for every feeling and thinking human being, in sickness even as well as in health.

In this sense, indeed, the child brought fresh life with her to all who lived in her new home—to the servants as well as to

the master and mistress. The cloud had rarely found its way into that happy dwelling in former days: now the sunshine seemed fixed there for ever. No more beautiful and touching proof of what the gentle heroism of patient dispositions and loving hearts can do toward guiding human existence, unconquered and unsullied, through its hardest trials, could be found anywhere than was presented by the aspect of the painter's household. Here were two chief members of one little family circle, afflicted by such incurable bodily calamity as it falls to the lot of but few human beings to suffer—yet here were no signs, no tears, no vain repinings with each new morning, no gloomy thoughts to set work and terror watching by the pillow at night. In this home of love, life, even in its fraillest aspects, was still greater than its greatest trials; though only strong to conquer by virtue of its own innocence and purity, its simple unworldly aspirations, its heroic self-sacrificing devotion to the happiness and anxieties of others.

As the course of her education proceeded, many striking peculiarities became developed in Madonna's disposition, which seemed to be all more or less produced by the necessary influence of her affliction on the formation of her character. The social isolation to which that affliction condemned her, the solitude of thought and feeling into which it forced her, tended from an early period to make her mind remarkably self-reliant, for so young a girl. Though she paid the readiest deference to the opinions of others, she always seemed to have convictions of her own in reserve—judging for herself on all occasions as it generally seemed to those about her, more by instinct than by reason. This peculiarity in her character was often curiously exemplified by her behavior to the different visitors who came to Mr. Blyth's house.

Her first impression of strangers seemed invariably to decide her opinion of them at once and for ever. She liked or disliked people heartily; estimating them apparently from considerations entirely irrespective of age, or sex, or personal appearance. Sometimes, the very person who was thought certain to attract her, proved to be absolutely repulsive to her—sometimes people who, in Mr. Blyth's opinion, were sure to be unwelcome visitors to Madonna, turned out, incomprehensibly, to be people whom she took a violent liking to directly. She always betrayed her pleasure or uneasiness in the society of others with the most diverting candor—showing the extreme anxiety to conciliate and attract those whom she liked; running away and hiding herself like a child, from those whom she disliked. There were some unhappy people in this latter class, whom no per-

suasion could ever induce her to see a second time, if she could possibly avoid it.

She could never give any satisfactory account of how she proceeded in forming her opinions of others. The only visible means of arriving at them, which her deafness and dumbness permitted her to use, consisted simply in examination of a stranger's manner, expression, and play of features at a first interview. This process, however, seemed always amply sufficient for her; and in more than one instance events proved that her judgment had not been misled by it. Her affliction had tended, indeed, to sharpen her faculties of observation and her powers of analysis to such a remarkable degree, that she often guessed the general tenor of a conversation quite correctly, merely by watching the minute varieties of expression and gesture in the persons speaking—fixing her attention always with especial intentness on the changeful and rapid motions of their lips.

Exiled alike from the worlds of sound and speech, the poor girl's enjoyment of all that she could still gain of happiness, by means of the seeing sense that was left her, was inconceivable in its intensity to her speaking and hearing fellow-creatures. All beautiful sights, and particularly the exquisite combinations that nature presents, filled her with an artless rapture, which it affected the most unimpressible people to witness. Trees were beyond all other objects the greatest luxuries that her eyes could enjoy. She would sit for hours, on fresh summer evenings, watching the mere waving of the leaves; her face flushed, her whole nervous organization trembling with the sensations of deep and perfect happiness which that simple sight imparted to her. All the riches and honors which this world can afford, would not have added to her existence a tithe of that pleasure which Valentine easily conferred on her, by teaching her to draw; he might almost be said to have given her a new sense in exchange for the sense that she had lost. She often used to dance about the room with the reckless ecstasy of a child, in her ungovernable delight at the prospect of a sketching expedition with Mr. Blyth in the Hampstead fields.

At a very early date of her sojourn with Valentine, it was discovered that her total deafness did not entirely exclude her from every effect of sound. She was acutely sensitive to the influence of percussion—that is to say (if so vague and contradictory an expression may be allowed), she could, under certain conditions, *feel* the sounds that she could not hear. For example, if Mr. Blyth wished to bring her to his side when they were together in the painting-room, and when she happened neither to be looking at him nor to be within reach



of a touch, he used to rub his foot, or the end of his mahlstick gently against the floor. The slight concussion so produced, reached her nerves instantly; provided always that some part of her body touched the floor on which such experiments were tried.

As a means of extending her facilities of social communication, she was instructed in the deaf and dumb alphabet by Valentine's direction; he and his wife, of course, learning it also; and many of their intimate friends, who were often in the house, following their example for Madonna's sake. Oddly enough, however, she frequently preferred to express herself, or to be addressed by others, according to the clumsier and slower system of signs and writing, to which she had been accustomed from childhood. She carefully preserved her little slate with its ornamented frame, and kept it hanging at her side, just as she wore it on the morning of her visit to the rectory-house at Rubbleford.

In one exceptional case, and one only, did her misfortune appear to have the power of effecting her tranquillity seriously. Whenever, by any accident, she happened to be left in the dark, she was overcome by the most violent terror. It was found, even when others were with her, that she never could keep her self-possession at such times. Her own explanation of her feelings on these occasions, at once suggested the simplest and best of reasons to account for this weakness in her character. "Remember," she wrote on her slate, when a new servant was curious to know why she always slept with a light in her room—"Remember that I am deaf and blind too in the darkness. You, who can hear, have a sense to serve you, instead of sight, in the dark—your ears are of use to you then, as your eyes are in the light. Not hearing anything, I seem to lose all my senses together, when I can't see anything; and this is why I can't help feeling lost, and helpless, and frightened out of my wits when I'm in the darkness."

It was only by rare accidents, which there was no providing against, that she was ever terrified in this way, after her horror of being in the dark had been first discovered. In this, as in all other matters, Valentine made her happiness his own peculiar care. He was, in truth, unnecessarily sensitive about her in many things; and often suffered anxieties on her account, which he was afraid or ashamed to confess to anybody, sometimes even including his wife.

The first and the chief of these anxieties, however, he was obliged to communicate to others, for the sake of securing his own peace of mind. He had a morbid dread that Madonna might be one day traced and dis-

covered by her father, or by some of her surviving relatives. His heart sickened at the bare thought of the desolation that would fall upon his household, if the adopted child who was now the great object in life to his wife and himself, should ever, by any evil chance, be claimed and taken away from them. To avert by every means in his power any possibility of the occurrence of such a calamity as this, he determined to keep all the particulars he knew about Madonna's birth, as well as the circumstances under which he himself at first met with her, a profound secret from everybody—from intimate friends, and from mere acquaintances alike.

Animated by this resolution, he wrote off to Doctor Joyce and Mrs. Peckover a day or two after the child's first entry under his roof, stating his motives for observing the strictest precaution in relation to her, and pledging both the persons whom he addressed to the deepest secrecy accordingly. As for the hair bracelet, if his conscience had allowed him, he would have destroyed it immediately; but feeling that this would be an inexcusable breach of trust, he was fain to be content with locking it up, as well as the pocket-handkerchief, in one of the most private recesses of an old bureau in his painting-room, the key of which he always kept attached to his own watch-chain.

Not one of his London friends ever knew how he first met with Madonna. He baffled all forms of inquiry with one form of answer. The circumstances (he used to say) were very melancholy, and such as he must be excused from relating—except indeed as to her deafness, which he had no objection to state was the result of a severe fall. He would take it as a favor if people would be pleased to consider her history before she came into his house as a perfect blank. But now that she was a member of his family, all friends were welcome to cultivate her acquaintance in her proper character, as his adopted daughter—as "Miss Blyth," if it would be any particular gratification to others to call her so. This method of silencing troublesome curiosity succeeded certainly to admiration; but at the expense of Mr. Blyth's own moral character. Kind friends, with the exception of some few who were really acquainted with his real disposition and his early life, all shook their heads, and laughed in secret; saying that the mystery was plain enough to the most ordinary capacity, for the young lady could be neither more nor less than a natural child of his own.

Mrs. Blyth was much more indignant at this report than her husband, when in due time it reached the painter's house. Valentine was not the man to care a straw about calumny, so long as it was only confined to his own character. He would have been

now perfectly easy about the preservation of his secret, but for a little distrust, which he felt at times in spite of himself, on the subject of Mrs. Peckover's discretion. He was not so easily convinced, as he ought to have been, of that excellent woman's power of governing her tongue on all occasions: and what was worse, he could not keep his doubts on this important point to himself, even in her presence.

It was the most amusing thing in the world to hear Mr. Blyth solemnly warning Mrs. Peckover to be careful in keeping the important secret, every time she came to London to see Madonna. Whether she only paid them a visit for the day, and then went away again—or whether she spent her Christmas with them, on those occasions when her husband got a pantomime engagement at one of the minor theatres—Valentine's greeting always ended nervously with this distrustful question:—"Excuse me for asking, Mrs. Peckover, but are you quite sure you have kept what you know about little Mary and her mother, and dates and places and all that, properly hidden from prying people, since you were here last?" At which point Mrs. Peckover generally answered by repeating, always with the same sarcastic emphasis: "Properly hidden, did you say, sir? Of course I keep what I know properly hidden, for of course I can hold my tongue. In my time, sir, it used always to take two parties to play at a game of Hide and Seek. Who in the world is seeking after little Mary, I should like to know?"

Perhaps Mrs. Peckover's view of the case was the right one, and there was really no need to fear that any paternal claimant was in search of Madonna—or, perhaps, the extraordinary discretion observed by the persons who were in the secret of her history, prevented any particulars connected with the girl's origin from reaching her father or friends, presuming them to be still alive and anxiously looking for her. But, at any rate, let it happen from what cause it might, this much at least is certain, that nobody was ever heard of as wanting to assert a claim to Valentine's adopted child, from the time when he took her home with him as his daughter, to the time when the reader first made his acquaintance, many pages back, in the congenial sphere of his own new painting-room.\*

\* I do not know that any attempt has yet been made in English fiction to draw the character of a "deaf-mute," simply and exactly after nature—or, in other words, to exhibit the peculiar effects produced by the loss of the sources of hearing and speaking on the disposition of the person so afflicted. The famous French *deaf-mute*, "Peccat of the Peak," only *seems* deafness and dumbness; and the whole family of dumb people on the stage have the remarkable faculty, as far as my experience goes, of always being able to hear what is said to them. When

## CHAPTER IX.

### VISITOR IN THE STUDIO

It is now a long time ago since we left Mr. Blyth and Madonna in the studio. The first was engaged, it may be remembered in the arduous process of smartening up Bacchanalian nymphs in the foreground of a grand classical landscape. The second was modestly occupied in making a copy of the head of the Venus de Medici.

The two sit nearly at opposite ends of the studio, working away steadily—Valentine, in particular, paying such breathless attention to his task, that he can not even whistle "Drops of Brandy" as usual; and has only left his place once that morning to see how Madonna is getting on. It is past one o'clock already, when a tremendous ring is heard at the house-bell.

"There he is!" cries Mr. Blyth to himself, pausing in the very act of putting a high light on a nymph's thigh:—"There's Zack!—got away from the tea merchant's, and come here according to promise. I know his ring among a thousand; it's worse even than the postman's; it's like an alarm of fire!"

Here Valentine drums gently with his mahlstick on the floor. Madonna looks toward him directly; he waves his hand round and round rapidly above his head. This is the sign which means "Zack." The

idea first occurred to me of representing the character of a "deaf-mute" as literally as possible according to nature, I found the difficulty of getting at unguile and reliable materials to work from much greater than I had anticipated: so much greater indeed, that I believe my design must have been abandoned if a lucky chance had not thrown in my way Doctor Kitto's delightful little book, "The Lost Senses. In the first division of that work, which contains the author's interesting and touching narrative of his own sensations under the total loss of the sense of hearing, and its consequent effect on the faculties of speech, will be found my authority for most of those traits in Madonna's character which are especially and immediately connected with the deprivation from which she is represented as suffering. The moral purpose to be answered by the introduction of such a personage as this, and of the kindred character of the painter's wife, lies, I would fain hope, so plainly on the surface, that it can be hardly necessary for me to indicate it even to the most careless reader. I know of nothing which more firmly supports our faith in the better parts of human nature, than to see—as we all may—with what patience and cheerfulness the heavier bodily afflictions of humanity are born, for the most part, by those afflicted, and also to note what elements of kindness and gentleness the spectacle of those afflictions constantly develops in the persons of the little circle by which the sufferer is surrounded. Here is the ever bright side, the ever noble and consoling aspect of all human calamity: and the object of presenting this to the view of others, as truly, as worthily, and as tenderly as in him lies, seems to me to be a fit object for any writer who desires to address himself to the best and readiest sympathies of his readers.

W. W. C.



girl smiles brightly, and blushes as she sees it. Zack is evidently one of her special favorites.

While the young gentleman is being admitted at the garden-gate, there is a leisure moment to explain how he became acquainted with Mr. Blyth.

Valentine's father and Mrs. Thorpe's father (the identical Mr. Goodworth who figures at the beginning of this narrative as one of the actors in the Sunday drama at Baregrove square) were intimate friends of that drowsy-story-telling and copious-port-drinking old school, the last relics of which are now fast disappearing from among us. The friendly intercourse between these gentlemen spread, naturally enough, to the sons and daughters who formed their respective families. From the time of Mr. Thorpe's marriage to Miss Goodworth, however, the connection between the junior Goodworths and Blyths began to grow less intimate—so far, at least, as the new bride and Valentine were concerned. The rigid modern puritan of Baregrove square, and the eccentric votary of the fine arts, mutually disapproved of each other from the very first. Visits of ceremony were exchanged at long intervals; but even these were discontinued on Madonna's arrival under Valentine's roof; for Mr. Thorpe was one of the first of the charitable friends of the family, who suspected her to be the painter's natural child, and said he thought it his duty to discourage immorality by discontinuing Mr. Blyth's acquaintance. An almost complete separation accordingly ensued for some years, until Zack grew up to boy's estate, and was taken to see Valentine, one day in holiday time, by his grandfather. He and the painter became friends directly. Mr. Blyth liked boys, and boys of all degrees liked him. He good-naturedly made overtures of civility to Zack's parent about this time, which were, however, accepted so coldly, that they were never renewed; the boy, nevertheless frequented Valentine's house at every opportunity, and never neglected his artist-friend in after-years. At the date of this story, one of the many points in his son's conduct, of which Mr. Thorpe disapproved on high moral grounds, was the firm determination the lad showed to keep up his intimacy with Mr. Valentine Blyth.

Let us now get back to the ring at the bell.

Zack's approach to the painting-room was heralded by a scuffling of feet, a loud noise of talking, and a great deal of suspicious giggling on the part of the housemaid, who had let him in. Suddenly these sounds ceased—the door was dashed open—and Mr. Thorpe, junior, burst into the room.

"Dear old Blyth! how are you?" cried

Zack. "Have you had any leap-frog since I was here last? Jump up, and let's celebrate my entry into the painting-room with a bit of manly exercise in our old way. Come on! I'll give the first back. No shirking! Put down your palette; and one two, three—and over!"

While pronouncing these last words, Zack ran to the end of the room opposite to Valentine; and signified his entry into the studio by the extraordinary process of giving its owner, what is termed in the technical language of leap-frog, "a capital back."

Mr. Blyth put down his palette, brushes, and mahlstick—tucked up his cuffs and smiled—took a little trial skip into the air, and became serious—cried out "lower!"—took another trial skip—and, running down the room with the heavy and slightly tremulous step of a gentleman of fifty, cleared Zack in gallant style; falling over, it is true, on the other side all in a lump on his hands and feet, but giving the return "back" conscientiously, at the other end of the room; and being leaped over in an instant, with a shout of triumph, by Zack. The athletic ceremonies thus concluded, the two stood up together and shook hands heartily.

"Too stiff, Blyth—too stiff and shaky by half," said the young gentleman. "I haven't kept you up enough in your gymnastics lately. We must have some more leap-frog in the garden; and I'll bring the gloves next time, and open your chest by teaching you to fight. Splendid exercise, and so good for your jolly old liver."

Delivering this opinion, Zack ran off to Madonna, who had been keeping the Venus de Medici from being shaken down, while she looked on at the leap-frog—excessively amused, but a little nervous on Mr. Blyth's account. "How is the dearest, prettiest, gentlest love in the world?" cried Zack, taking her hand, and kissing it with boisterous fondness. "Ah! she lets other old friends kiss her cheek, and only lets me kiss her hand!—I say, Blyth, what a little witch she is; I'll lay you two to one she's guessed what I've just been saying to her."

A bright flush overspread the girl's face, while Zack addressed her. Her tender blue eyes looked up at him, shyly conscious of the pleasure that their expression was betraying; and the neat folds of her pretty gray dress, which had lain so still over her bosom when she was drawing, began to rise and fall gently now, when Zack was holding her hand. If young Thorpe had not been the most careless, restless, and thoughtless of human beings—as much a boy still, in many respects, as when he was locked up in his father's dressing-room for bad behavior at church—he might have guessed long ago, why he was the only one of

Madonna's old friends whom she did not permit to kiss her on the cheek!

But Zack neither guessed, nor thought of guessing, anything of this sort. His flighty thoughts flew off in a moment from the young lady to his cigar-case; and he walked away to the hearth-rug, twisting up a piece of waste paper into a lighter as he went.

When Madonna returned to her drawing, her eyes wandered timidly once or twice to the place where Zack was standing, when she thought he was not looking at her; and, assuredly, so far as his personal appearance was concerned, young Thorpe was handsome enough to tempt any woman into glancing at him with approving eyes. He was over six feet in height; and, though then little more than nineteen years old, was well developed in proportion to his stature. His boxing, rowing, and other athletic exercises, had done wonders toward bringing his naturally vigorous, upright frame to the perfection of healthy muscular condition. Tall and strong as he was, there was nothing stiff or ungainly in his movements. He trod easily and lightly, with a certain youthful suppleness and hardy grace in all his actions, which set off his fine bodily formation to the best advantage. He had keen, quick, mischievous gray eyes—a thoroughly English red and white complexion—admirably bright and regular teeth—and curly light brown hair, with a very peculiar golden tinge in it, which was only visible when his head was placed in a particular light. In short, Zack was a manly handsome fellow, a thorough Saxon, every inch of him; and (physically speaking at least) a credit to the parents and the country that had given him birth.

"Hullo, Snooks!" said he, looking down at the cat who lay between his legs, "you've got another kitten, have you? and you're doing as well as can be expected, you prolific little devil—eh? I say, Blyth, you and Madonna don't mind smoke?"—he added, lighting his cigar.

"No—no," said Valentine. "But, Zack, you wrote me word that your father had taken all your cigars away from you—"

"So he has, and all my pocket-money too. But I've taken to helping myself, and got some glorious weeds. Try one, Blyth," said the young gentleman, sublimely puffing out a stream of smoke through each nostril.

"Taken to helping yourself!" exclaimed Mr. Blyth. "What on earth do you mean?"

"Oh!" said Zack, "don't be afraid. It's not thieving; it's only barter. Look here, my dear fellow, I'll tell you all about it. My friend, the junior clerk at the tea-shop, has three dozen weeds, and I have a beastly Albert neck-tie that's only fit for a gent to wear. The junior clerk gives me the three dozen weeds, and I give the junior clerk the Albert neck-tie. That's barter, and bar'er's

commerce, old chap! It's all my father's fault. He will make a tradesman of me. Ain't I a good boy to be doing a bit of commerce already on my own account?"

"I'll tell you what, Zack," said Mr. Blyth, speaking rather absently in consequence of being professionally engaged at that moment in enlarging the folds of a Bacchante's blue petticoat; "I'll tell you what, I don't like the way you're going on in at all; your last letter made me very uneasy, I can promise you."

"You can't be half as uneasy as I am," rejoined Zack. "I'm jolly enough here, to be sure, because I can't help it somehow; but at home I'm the most miserable devil on the face of the earth. My father balks me in everything, and makes me turn hypocrite, and take him in, in all sorts of ways—which I hate myself for doing; and yet can't help doing, because he forces me to it. Why does he want to make me live in the same slow way that he does himself? There's some difference in our ages, I rather think! Why don't he let me have a key to the door? Why does he bully me about being always home by eleven o'clock? I only want to amuse myself quietly as other chaps do. Upon my soul, Blyth, I believe he thinks it's my natural disposition to be gambling, quarrelling, seducing, running in debt, and getting blind drunk every night of my life!"

"Come, come, Zack! don't talk in that way, even in joke."

"Oh, yes! it's all very well, you old humbug, to shake your head at me; but you wouldn't like being forced into an infernal tea-shop, when you wanted to be an artist, if you were in my place. Look here! What do you think I had to do yesterday? They had a tea-tasting, as they call it, at the office. They made fifty small pots of fifty different sorts of tea, and poured them all out into fifty yellow gallipots. Then the principal partner puts a spoon into my hand and says, 'Do as I do.' And, by Jove, he goes all down the fifty gallipots, beginning at number one, and takes a spoonful from each, and rolls it about in his mouth, and then spits it out into a tin basin with a spout like they have at the dentists', and writes down in a book some abominable hocus-pocus of lines and dots, at the end of each spit, which he says is the character of the tea. And I have to imitate him! Fifty of the spoonfuls, and fifty of the spits, and fifty of the hocus-pocuses, did I go through yesterday. I ask you, or any man, if it isn't too bad to force me into such a tea and expectation line of business as that? Of course it is! But I've made up my mind. I want to be an artist, and I will be an artist. Don't lecture, Blyth—it's no use; but just tell me how I'm to begin learning to draw."



This demand of Zack's touched Valentine on his weak point. Art was his grand topic; and to ask his advice on that subject, was to administer the sweetest flattery to his professional pride. He wheeled his chair round directly, so as to face young Thorpe. "If you're really set on being an artist," he began enthusiastically, "I rather fancy, Master Zack, I'm the man to help you. First of all, you know, you must start with drawing from the antique (here he jumped up excitably). Begin, my boy, with the glorious works of Greek sculpture, which will teach you the eternal principles of taste, and—and, in short everything. Stop! just wait one minute! there's a bit of work here that I must finish. Never mind my painting—I can use my brush and my tongue both together."

Here Mr. Blyth returned in a great hurry to his picture; neglecting to move his chair round again, and perching himself briskly on the back rail. In this position he now began to throw a little more intellect (as he said) into the venerable bald head of the philosopher; who was represented in his composition as meditating profoundly on the gambols of the dancing nymphs.

"You'll be down directly, Blyth, if you sit like that," said Zack.

"Oh, no! I'm used to it," said Valentine; I rather like the position; it reminds one of sitting on the top of a stile, and sketching from nature in the country."

"By George, so it does!" cried Zack, taking a chair directly, and putting himself into Mr. Blyth's position; "but, I say! don't you find it cuts you a little, in the long run—eh?"

"So does a stile, if you sit long enough on it," rejoined Valentine. "But let's get back to what we were talking about. Let me see—what was I saying? Oh! the antique. (Just hand me the palette-knife, will you?) Well, you must form yourself on the antique; by which, you know, I mean ancient sculpture—look there! just what Madonna's doing now; *she's* forming herself on the antique."

Zack went immediately to look at Madonna's drawing; the outline of which was now finished. "Beautiful! Splendid! Ah, confound it, yes! the eternal principles, and all that, just as you say, Blyth. A most wonderful drawing! the finest thing of the kind I ever saw in my life!" Here he transferred his superlatives to his fingers, communicating them to Madonna through the medium of the deaf and dumb alphabet, which he had superficially mastered with extraordinary rapidity under Mr. and Mrs. Blyth's tuition. Whatever Zack's friends did, Zack always admired with the wildest enthusiasm, and without an instant's previous consideration. Any knowledge of what he praised, or why he praised it, was

a slight superfluity of which he never felt the want. If Madonna had been a great astronomer, and had shown him pages of mathematical calculations, he would have ejaculated vehement eulogies just as glibly as—by means of the finger alphabet—he was ejaculating them now.

But Valentine's pupil was used to be criticised as well as praised; and her head was in no danger of being turned by Zack's admiration of her drawing. Looking up at him with a sly expression of incredulity, she signed these words in reply: "I am afraid it ought to be a much better drawing than it is. Do you really like it?" Zack rejoined impetuously by a fresh torrent of superlatives. She watched his face, for a moment, rather anxiously and inquiringly, then bent down quickly over her drawing. He walked back to Valentine. Her eyes followed him—then returned once more to the paper before her. The color began to rise again in her cheek; a thoughtful expression stole calmly over her clear, happy eyes; she played nervously with the port crayon that held her black and white chalk; looked attentively at the drawing; and, smiling very prettily at some fancy of her own, proceeded assiduously with her employment, altering and amending, as she went on, with more than usual industry and care.

What was Madonna thinking of? If she had been willing, and able, to utter her thoughts, she might have expressed them thus: "I wonder whether he really likes my drawing? Yes, I am sure he does, or he would not have said so. Shall I try hard if I can't make it better worth pleasing him? I will! it shall be the best thing I have ever done. And then, when it is nicely finished, I will take it secretly to Mrs. Blyth to give from me, as my present to Zack."

"Look there," said Valentine, turning from his picture toward Madonna, "look, my boy, how carefully and anxiously that dear good child there is working from the antique! I must take her out for a walk soon, or she will be getting a headache. Only copy her example, and I'll answer for your being able to draw from the life in less than a year's time."

"You don't say so? Oh, that cursed tea-shop! I should like to sit down and begin at once. But, look here, Blyth, when you say 'draw from the life,' you mean—of course, there can't be the smallest doubt about what you mean—but, at the same time, you know, old fellow—eh? In short, hang me if I understand exactly what you do mean?"

"Gracious Heavens, Zack, in what criminal ignorance of art your parents must have brought you up! I mean drawing the living human figure from the living human

being which sits at a shilling an hour, and calls himself a model."

"Ah, yes, to be sure! I understand now (in fact I had a sort of a glimmering before). Some of those people whose names are written here over your fireplace?—Delightful! Glorious! Drawing from the life—just the very thing I long for most. *Hullo!*" exclaimed Zack, turning round to read the confused memoranda above the chimney-piece, and lighting accidentally on the particular line which has been quoted in the chapter of this narrative that describes Valentine's studio—"Hul. ! 'Daniel Sulsh, athletic model with bear!'. Oh, Lord! how I should like to see Sulsh! I say, Blyth, is he the sort of chap I ought to begin upon?"

"He's a capital model," said Valentine with a little hesitation; "his beard grows to his waist: and he has a splendid Farnese Hercules development—in fact, we call him 'Hercules Sulsh,' in the profession. But he's a difficult fellow to manage. Some people think him a little cracked; and he certainly does walk about with a black cocked hat, and rusty knee-breeches—or, at least, he *did*; for he's in the house of correction now, poor fellow!"

"What have they put him in there for?" asked Zack.

"Well," replied Mr. Blyth, "it's not so easy to say. You must know, one of his oddities is that he sees visions, which command him to do all sorts of extraordinary things—at least he says so himself. He got into this scrape, through seeing a vision in the Laburnum road, close by here. He was out walking, and stopped to look at a horse and gig, standing, without anybody to mind them, at a garden gate; the horse being tied up to a lamp-post. Well, he saw a vision which commanded him to get into the gig, and drive out a couple of miles or so, on the Northern road, for an airing to improve his health. (You may laugh, Zack; but he told me this himself, when I went to see him in prison.) I dare say you won't believe it; but he actually got into the gig and took his drive, and was met, coming back to Laburnum road (with his health, he said, greatly benefited), by the owner of the gig, who gave him in custody directly. His defence before the magistrate was that he couldn't possibly disobey the vision, and that he was bringing the gig back to where he took it from, when he was caught. Everybody thought him mad, except the magistrate, who said he was drunk, and committed him, cocked hat and all, as a rogue and vagabond. He goes on having visions, even in the house of correction; and I dare say he'll come here and tell me about them, the first thing when he gets out. However, upon the whole, Zack,

I shouldn't recommend your employing Sulsh—at least to begin with."

"Well, here's another name," said Zack, going on with the memoranda above the chimney-piece. "'Amelia Bibby'—oh, by Jove, a woman! That's much nicer than Sulsh. I'll begin with Amelia Bibby—eh, Blyth?"

"You may, if you go to the royal academy," said Valentine. "She sits there. She's a capital model, and so is her sister, Sophia. The worst of it is, they quarrelled mortally a little while ago; and now, if an artist has Sophia, Amelia won't come to him. And Sophia, of course, returns the compliment, and won't sit to Amelia's friends. It's very awkward for people who used to employ them both, turn and turn about, as I did."

"But what did they quarrel about?" inquired Zack.

"A teapot," answered Mr. Blyth. "You see they are daughters of one of the late king's footmen, and are desperately proud of their aristocratic origin. They used to live together as happy as birds, without a hard word ever being spoken between them, till one day they happened to break their teapot, which, of course, set them talking about getting a new one. Sophia said it ought to be earthenware, like the last; Amelia contradicted her, and said it ought to be metal. Sophia said all the aristocracy used earthenware; Amelia said all the aristocracy used metal. Sophia said she was oldest, and knew best; Amelia said she was youngest, and knew better. Sophia said Amelia was an impudent jackanapes; Amelia said Sophia was a plebeian wretch. From that moment they parted. Sophia sits in her own lodging, and drinks tea out of earthenware; Amelia sits in *her* own lodging, and drinks tea out of metal. They swear never to make it up, and abuse each other furiously to everybody who will listen to them. Very shocking and very curious at the same time, isn't it, Zack?"

"Oh, capital! best bit of human nature I ever heard in my life," exclaimed the young gentleman, smoking with the air of a profound philosopher. "But, tell me, Blyth, which is the prettiest, Amelia or Sophia? Metal or earthenware? My mind's made up, beforehand, to employ the best-looking of the two, if you have no objection."

"Which is the prettiest, eh?" said Mr. Blyth, slowly backing away from his picture into the middle of the room, and trying to speak about the nymphs, Amelia and Sophia, while his thoughts were all with their allegorical sisterhood on his own canvass. "Well, I really don't know; they're both fine girls. Sometimes one looks best, and sometimes the other. Amelia, being the biggest and fattest of the two, is, of



course—though I can hardly say whether Sophia's figure isn't upon the whole—I beg your pardon, Zack! I know I'm talking nonsense; but there's something bothers me just now in my picture, and I can't quite make out what it is. Dear, dear, dear me! the foreground's in a mess somewhere; and I can't for the life of me make out where."

"Oh, come, nonsense!" cried Zack, looking at the picture with his most confidently critical air. "It's the grandest foreground I ever saw in my life. Real poetry and—and, in fact, upon my soul what you call real poetry. That's my candid opinion, Blyth. If the patrons of art don't lug out handsomely to get such an inestimable gem as that picture—"

"Stop! for heaven's sake, stop!" cried Valentine, in a fever of excitement, "I've found it out. I've got at the mess in the foreground. It's in the bushes there, to the left of the figures. I've fetched out the nymphs and fetched out the philosopher, and now I must fetch out the bushes. They're flat, and feeble, and funky in point of painting—they want a little vigor crisply pitched into them, and they shall have it!"

"Well, now you mention it, perhaps they do," said Zack. "But then the devil of it is, how are you to manage, eh?"

"I'll manage it in two seconds," said Mr. Blyth, whirling his palette-knife round and round in his hand, in a fine frenzy of artistic inspiration. "You have only to suppose those bushes furze-bushes in bloom, and it's done. Don't say a word yet, till I've fetched them fairly out by throwing every nan-jack of them into full bloom!"

Speaking thus, Mr. Blyth now proceeded to perform by one great effort those two difficult and delicate operations in art, technically described as "putting in taky touches, and bringing out bits of effect." These arduous final processes, are, as all painters know, only to be accomplished through the medium of certain mystic bodily evolutions, of the same intricate nature as those to which Valentine now abandoned himself.

He first took up a little bright yellow paint on the top of his palette-knife, and solemnly held it out from him at arm's length, frowning intently at his picture for a moment or so. Then he excitably jumped forward a step—then nervously jumped backward again into his former place; indecisively describing strange figures in the air with his palette-knife. Suddenly, the expected moment of artistic inspiration came. He ran at his picture as if he were about to jump, harlequin-fashion, through the canvass—smeared the yellow paint over the bushes; passing the palette-knife across them in one ferocious zig-zag sweep

from end to end; rubbed the color violently into the surface, at certain places, with the ball of his thumb; ran back in a great hurry to his former point of view in the middle of the room; dropped his head very much on one side; held up two fingers before the figure-part of the picture; and, in that position, surveyed with breathless attention the general effect of the bloom on the furze-bushes.

"I've done it!" exclaimed Valentine, drawing a long breath. "I've done it to my complete satisfaction." (Here he made another dash at the bushes with his palette-knife and his thumb.) "You look surprised, Zack. I dare say you never saw bits of effect thrown into a picture before. It's wonderful what we can do in art with our thumbs, in ticklish operations of this sort. Upon my honor, I'm so satisfied with the foreground, now I look at it again, that I think I shall give over work for the day, and take Madonna out to study effects of snow in the country. It's a deliciously bright, frosty afternoon for a walk. I wish you could come with us, Zack. By-the-by, I mustn't forget what lots of advice I've still got to give you about the art. But, tell me first, are you really and truly determined to be a painter?"

"I mean to be a painter, or I mean to bolt from home," said Zack, resolutely. "If you don't help me, I'll be off as sure as fate! I have half a mind to cut the tea-shop from this moment; and go out to study effects of snow with you and Madonna, instead of going back to cast up sums at the office. Stop a minute! By Jupiter! I'll toss up for it. Heads, liberty and the fine arts; tails, the tea-shop. I've got a shilling in my pocket: here goes!"

"If you don't put the shilling back directly," said Valentine, "and stick to your engagements, I wash my hands of you; but, if you wait patiently, and promise to show all the attention you can, at least for the present, to your father's wishes, I'll teach you myself to draw from the antique. If somebody can be found who has influence enough with your father to get him to let you go into the royal academy, you must be prepared beforehand with a drawing that's fit to show. Now you shall come here, if you promise to be a good boy, and learn the A B C of art in the evening: every evening if you like. We'll have a regular little academy," continued Valentine, putting down his palette and brushes, and rubbing his hands in high glee; "and if it isn't too much for Lavvie, the plaster-model shall be set in her room; and she shall draw, poor dear soul! as well as the rest of us. There's an idea for you, Zack! Mr. Blyth's drawing-academy, open every evening with tea and muffins for industrious students. What do you say to it?"

"Say? by George, sir, I'll come every night, and get through acres of chalk and miles of drawing-paper!" cried Zack, catching Valentine's enthusiasm directly; "and what's more, I undertake to toast the muffins. I don't want to brag, but there's a young man now alive who's the greatest lab at toasting muffins that ever existed; his name is Zachary Thorpe, and he attends drawing-academies, free, gratis, for nothing. Only let him eat his little whack out of what he toasts, and don't spare the batter, and—"

"Stop a minute, Zack," interposed Mr. Blyth. "What time ought you to be back in the city? it's two o'clock now."

"Oh! three o'clock will do. That greedy little beast of a junior clerk won't have stuffed down all his steaks and porter before three. I've got lots of time yet, for I mean to go back on the top of a 'bus.'"

"You have got about ten minutes more to stay," said Valentine, in his firmest manner. "Would you like to go up-stairs, and say how d'ye do to Lavvie? Ah, I needn't ask! Go at once, then, and take Madonna with you; I'll follow as soon as I've put away my brushes."

Saying these words, Mr. Blyth walked to the place where Madonna was still at work. She was so deeply engaged over her drawing that she had never once looked up from it for the last quarter-of-an-hour or more; and when Valentine patted her shoulder approvingly, and made her a sign to leave off, she answered by a gesture of entreaty, which eloquently enough implored him to let her proceed for a little while longer with her employment. She had never at other times been at all anxious to claim an indulgence of this kind, when she was drawing from the antique; but then she had never, at other times, been occupied in making a copy which was secretly intended as a present for Zack.

Valentine, however, immediately induced her to relinquish her port-crayon. He laid his hand on his heart, which was the sign that had been adopted to indicate Mrs. Blyth. Madonna started up, and put her drawing-materials aside directly.

Zack, having thrown away the end of his cigar, gallantly advanced and offered her his arm. As she approached rather shyly to take it, he also laid his hand on his heart and pointed up-stairs. The action was quite enough for her. She understood immediately that they were going together to see Mrs. Blyth.

"Whether Zack really turns out a painter or not," said Valentine to himself, as the door closed on the two young people, "I believe I have hit on the best plan that ever was devised for keeping him steady. As long as he comes to me regularly, he can't break out at night, and get into mischief—

that's one comfort." Here Mr. Blyth paused, and began to wash his brushes in a tin pot full of turpentine, whistling softly, as was often his way in thoughtful moments. "It's strange," he continued after a little while, still thinking of Zack, and drying a favorite brush by passing it backward and forward gently over the palm of his hand—It's strange what an interest I have always felt in that rascally chap from the first. And, somehow, Lavvie and Madonna took to him directly, too, just as I did. I don't know anybody else that I would trust to be so intimate with our darling girl. But it's one blessed result of Zack's carelessness, that he don't ask prying questions about who she is, or where she comes from. No fear of her ever being traced out or taken away from me through that lad, at any rate.—I only wish I could feel just as certain about everybody else as I have always felt about Zack!"

It would be well for many of us if we were reminded, now and then, of some practical truths which we are a little too universally ready to forget. It would have been well for Mr. Blyth if he had added to the poetical quotations written on the wall, over his chimney-piece, the famous philosophical maxim which teaches mankind that the only way to pass through life without disappointment, is NEVER TO FEEL CERTAIN ABOUT ANYTHING.

## CHAPTER X.

### A GLANCE BACKWARD.

THE years that have elapsed since Zack's childhood have not been passed without producing some very perceptible changes for the worse in his father's personal appearance. Beyond this, however, the altering influence of Time has had but little effect on Mr. Thorpe. As to principles, habits, and manner, he is still the same rigid, grave, and joyless gentleman who, on a certain memorable Sunday, locked up his son in the dressing-room for bad behavior at church.

Though not older than Mr. Valentine Blyth, Mr. Thorpe now looked the painter's senior by at least twenty years. His hair had become prematurely white. His eyes were so uniformly and coldly thoughtful in expression, that they seemed to be but half alive. His natural slenderness of build had worn away gradually, in the course of time, almost to emaciation. His face was even more attenuated than his figure; it was so fleshless that the cheek-bones seemed to project unnaturally over hollows of pale dry skin, deeply wrinkled in a downward



direction, on either side of his nose and mouth. These evidences of external decay could not be ascertained to proceed from any directly physical cause. Mr. Thorpe certainly suffered at times from nervous attacks; but the general state of his health was, on the other hand, perfectly satisfactory, not only to himself, but even to the family doctor as well. His friends said that he had grown to look aged before his time, from incessant mental anxiety, which anxiety they invariably and indignantly connected with the name of Zack. Mr. Thorpe allowed them to talk as they pleased on this topic, never absolutely accepting or absolutely rejecting the condolences that were offered to him on the subject of his wayward son.

He had always been a remarkably silent man, and his taciturn habits had increased as he increased in years. His was not sulky, or mysterious, or variable silence; it seemed habitual and constitutional. What words he did utter were always of the same simple and straightforward kind. He never exaggerated in his talk, never used colloquial phrases, and never approached violence of language, even in the most trying moments of his intercourse with Zack.

He had inherited a sufficiently large fortune (amassed in commerce by his father), to absolve him from all necessity of working for his livelihood; but he was by no means an idle man on that account. Possessing very strong religious feelings; belonging to that large and respectable congregation of devout persons who seem to look at their religion exclusively from a controversial point of view, and to prize it chiefly for the sake of enforcing its prohibitions, Mr. Thorpe was just the man to feel an active and conscientious interest in the theological politics of his day. He was warmly attached to that particular section of professing Christians which is technically described as containing the "Low Church Party;" and liberally devoted his time, his energies, and his purse, to the service of the enterprising community to which he belonged. He was an active member of more than one alliance for propagating protestantism and annihilating popery; he was an influential and generous director of a famous tract society; he was secretary to a local school establishment, organized for the express purpose of preventing the Romanists from getting any ignorant children to teach; he was head of one of the branch-home-correspondence departments of a wealthy missionary corporation; he was president of a lay assembly of private gentlemen associated for the purpose of examining and interpreting prophecy—in short, he was always occupied in one way or another—controversially, proselytizingly, or theologically

—in advancing with all his heart and might, the best interests of the powerful religious party to whose service he was attached.

The house at Baregrove square was not a hospitable house; for its master was not a man who delighted in festivals, and expanded under the influences of social intercourse. He limited himself to giving small and mournful dinner-parties, choosing his guests from the friends who labored with him in the various societies to which he belonged, and from the clergymen under whose advice and influence they all acted. The conversation was invariably on controversial subjects on these occasions; the decanters circulated slowly after dinner; texts (generally selected from the most mystical passages in the revelation) were "expounded" upstairs in the drawing-room, by way of evening recreation. Zack was always ordered to be present at these solemnities for his own good; and suffered under the consequent mortification of flesh and spirit severely.

Sometimes he was ignominiously aroused before everybody, from semi-oblivious slumbers, while the "expounding" was in full progress. Sometimes he was discovered, and pitilessly checked, in manœuvring to get the tardy decanters prematurely brought within his own reach. Sometimes he was reprovved and lectured for abruptly leaving the dining-room before Mr. Thorpe and his guests had risen from table. Zack himself used to account for this last dereliction of duty to Mr. Blytn, by assuring that gentleman that he was obliged to run out of the room to avoid being overcome by certain morbid yearnings to tumble head over heels, to imitate the crowing of a cock, and to grind the heads of seriously-minded gentlemen against the wall behind them, which always disastrously assailed him whenever there was a pause in the solemn flow of conversation at his father's table.

Mr. Thorpe's only approach to any such levity as a recreation for his leisure hours consisted in gathering together and arranging autograph letters of celebrated men. The first places in this collection were assigned to ancient and modern divines; the second to politicians, especially those whose statesmanlike deafness to cries for reform recommended them to the admiration of a conservative posterity; the third to military and naval heroes; and the fourth to scientific celebrities. There was also a fifth, last, and lowest place, which was assigned to famous authors—an arrangement, by the way, perfectly in harmony with that ailing literary patriotism peculiar to the English constitution, which is still too delicate to bear the shock of seeing a national statue of Shakespeare erected, or the names of the illustrious brethren of Shakespeare's order inscribed, on any one of the great

public sites and streets of the British metropolis.

His books of autographs (for he had many volumes of them) seemed to be the principal solace of Mr. Thorpe's hours of repose by his own fireside. Engravings of the celebrated writers of the celebrated letters were neatly let into the top divisions of the thick quarto leaves which gave size and solidity to the books. They were all neatly bound in the same sad colored morocco suits, with indexes at the end, neatly written in Mr. Thorpe's own hand. He used often to sit for hours together, silently turning over the leaves of his collection; smoothing out accidentally crumpled pages of the letters, sticking them tight with gum at places where they had started, dusting the surface of the engravings gently with a large camel's hair brush; and, in fact, keeping the whole collection perfectly speckless in every part of it, from the first volume to the last. He never seemed to care much about showing his autographs to others; he never boasted about them, and never talked of what they had cost. He had a silent, thoughtful, undemonstrative pleasure in enjoying them entirely by himself, in his own study, and that was all.

Though in no sense of the word a domestic tyrant, he nevertheless reigned quietly and unobtrusively despotic over every member of his household—always excepting the ever-graceless and revolutionary Zack. The housemaid never "over-slept" herself, the cook was never unpunctual with dinner, and the page was always ready to answer the door, at Baregrove square. Winter and summer, spring and autumn, the whole domestic machine revolved always with the same unrelenting and ceaseless regularity. Morning and evening prayers were celebrated, the bell rang for breakfast at half-past eight, the front door was bolted for the night at eleven o'clock, never, in any instance, five minutes before, or five minutes after the appointed time. Accident, forgetfulness, hurry, delay, were four words practically superfluous to the English language under Mr. Thorpe's roof. His will possessed some inscrutable superiority which rendered it easily master of the wills of others who lived in daily contact with him. Still always excepting his insubordinate son, he so completely assimilated every soul in his abode to himself and his habits, that the whole household, down to the very boy who blacked the shoes, seemed to live only to reflect the domestic character, and develop the domestic principles of Mr. Thorpe.

His wife was a remarkable example of his mysterious power of moulding the dispositions of others into perfect conformity with his own, without the slightest appa-

rent effort, and without his influence being in any respect felt by those about him.

Although Mrs. Thorpe had less of the turbulent old Goodworth blood in her veins than any other member of her family, her manner, before her marriage, always exhibited palpable traces of her father's vivacity, and her conversation was always more or less enlivened by some hereditary sparkles of her Irish mother's wit. But, after her union with Mr. Thorpe, these natural characteristics began, one by one, to disappear. Gradually and insensibly the gay word and the joyous laugh came less and less frequently from her lips. Old friends of the Goodworths who could not prevail upon themselves to face Mr. Thorpe for the sake of seeing his wife, except at rare intervals, always remarked with astonishment how completely she was changed, how unnaturally like her husband she seemed to have become, and how amazingly positive she was in agreeing with him in all his most outrageous opinions, and all his most capricious tastes.

In time, the poor lady began to reflect her husband faithfully, even in personal appearance: she grew to resemble him outwardly and visibly by growing thin. Her father's favorite joke, in her days of plump girlhood, about buying a small steam-engine to lace her stays tight enough would have been wretched mockery in her days of wedded life. She lost, too, in complexion and gait, as well as in figure; these and other personal changes, which it would be ungallant to mention, proceeding, however, from no unusual bodily ailment, and, most assuredly, from no mental disappointment. They were simply the necessary physical consequences of the moral transformation effected in her by her union with Mr. Thorpe.

At the time of her marriage it had been whispered about among her friends that she had misconstrued some very ordinary attentions paid her by Mr. Thorpe, had fallen in love with him, and had long pined for him in secret, before he discovered it, and—more out of honor than affection—made his proposals to her. Her relations disapproved of her choice, but did not openly oppose it, and never plainly contradicted the rumors just alluded to. Whether they were true or not, it is at least certain that she was passionately fond of her husband, worshipping him of course only with that correctly-regulated species of amatory devotion which it was conjugally proper to offer to such a man. She thought him the wisest and perfectest of created beings. She accepted all his worst prejudices as semi-divine inspirations and truths. She judged everybody by his standard, and shuddered over all her acquaintances accordingly. She delighted in paying the most servile ad-<sup>d</sup> dence to his



slightest caprices. His minutest household formalities were sacred family ethics to her. If, for instance, one of her best friends had declared in her presence that nine o'clock was a good ordinary breakfast hour for families, she would have disagreed with the assertion immediately (though naturally the least disputatious human being ever created); and would have insisted that half-past eight was the better time—simply and solely because Mr. Thorpe had fixed half-past eight as the breakfast hour at Baregrove square. Thinking with her husband, feeling with him, living in his life, her heart was the moral thermometer which indicated the minutest changes of temperature in the atmosphere of his—indicated them truly to a hair's breadth, except in the one solitary case when the variations were referable to the stormy influence of Zack.

Toward her son she was still secretly unchanged. The old, loving, instinctive pride of her earliest maternal days in the beauty of her child, retained unassailably the same strong place in her heart which it had always held. Other shrines once seated there, beautiful and holy in their day, had long since been overthrown: *this* shrine remained indestructible to the last.

She wept often and bitterly over Zack's quarrels with his father; she was shocked and terrified, and indignant and despairing, by turns, at witnessing Zack's reckless insubordination—but she never once felt toward him as her husband felt, even in the lad's wildest excesses of scampish irregularity. That first affectionate, all-pervading sense of triumph which she used to feel at looking on her boy, or thinking of him, in his childish days, would burn on, warm as ever at her heart (though she tried hard to believe that it was sinful)—often at the very time when she was echoing, with tears in her eyes, her husband's fiercest condemnation of their son's rebellious conduct. She could say his behavior was unpardonable, she could tell Zack himself that it was unpardonable, and she could determine to feel conscientiously, that it must be unpardonable; but still, in spite of all, the mother's pride in his fine stature, his handsome healthy open face, his strength, hardihood, and high spirit, would plead for him; and, worse still, would often secretly take Zack's side against his father, though it was the wife's household religion firmly to believe that her husband was invariably in the right.

Perhaps, Mr. Thorpe suspected this weakness in her character, and believed accordingly that her advice would be useless to him on any subject connected with his son's delinquencies; for, though he often consulted clergymen and devout friends about the best method of disciplining Zack,

he never sought so much as five minutes' counsel from Zack's mother on that perplexing topic. Perhaps, on the other hand, he not only suspected his wife's weakness, but made allowance for it, and mercifully forbore, whenever he could, from submitting it to painful tests. He might well and justly have acted thus from motives of sympathy and humility only; for he had an abiding weakness of his own which exercised a curiously-debilitating influence over his otherwise vigorous and unbending disposition.

His one worldly ambition was to preserve intact the character of a respectable man. His one moral weakness was the constant dread of accidentally compromising this character, if he deviated in the smallest degree from the established routine of his chosen opinions, employments, society, and daily habits. His standard of respectability was unlimited and uncompromising. That widely-worshipped axiom of our commercial morality which asserts that any man (or rascal) is respectable who can "pay his way," was an axiom at which Mr. Thorpe shuddered. His vigorous respectability—both in theory and practice—ascended incomparably higher and descended ineffably lower than the weakly respectabilities of most of his neighbors. It rose to the climax of the most puritanical virtue and the most impossible mortal perfection: it sank to the most humble and familiar of the manners and customs of every-day life. It embraced at once the strictest watchfulness in preserving the proprieties of temper and the proprieties of dress. It was equally vigilant in regulating the flow of his language and the length of his nails. It began with his behavior at church: it ended with his behavior at tea.

If he worshipped respectability devoutly, he also worshipped it sincerely. If he anxiously washed the outside of the cup and platter, he did not forget to keep the inside clean too. He was not more virtuous in the broad glare of noonday than he was under cover of the darkest night. He was no such time-server, money-server, or rank-server with high moral principles, as may be seen among us every day. He was no hypocrite who secretly petted the sins that allured him, and openly castigated the sins that were not to his taste. In grim, uncompromising, very truth, he was what he assumed to be; what he gloried in being; what he dreaded as the direst of degradations, not to be—a respectable man. All the secret pulses of his moral and mental life hung together on the same thread (it is never more than a thread, in this world), which elevated his character above the reach of calumnies of every kind, great and small. As credit is prized by a merchant, as circulation is prized by an author, as

reputation is prized by a woman—so was respectability prized by Mr. Thorpe.

If he had not had any children, or, having them, if they had been daughters; if, or, to make the case all it really stood, if his son had happened to be of a quiet, passive, and cool-blooded nature, the various peculiarities which altogether composed Mr. Thorpe's character would never have reached that disastrous prominence, as domestic agents, into which circumstances had forced them, now and for some time past. Having, however, a son who was neither quiet, nor passive, nor cool-blooded; who seemed incomprehensibly to have inherited a disposition from his mother's family instead of his father's loins; whose exuberant energies, wild flow of spirits, and restless craving after excitement, dissipation, and change, would have tried the endurance of the most indulgent parental rule; having, in short, such a son as Zack, every one of Mr. Thorpe's favorite prejudices, principles, and opinions, acquired a fatal importance, merely from the direct influence which they involuntarily exercised, not only in aggravating the filial irregularities, but also even in producing those very offences which he was most vigilantly anxious to restrain. Such pages of this book as are destined faithfully to relate the tribulations of Zack, must not shrink from candidly acknowledging that the first cause which immediately produced them was often, in plain words, no other than Mr. Thorpe himself.

Among the list of capacities which some people seem to be born without possessing, or bred without acquiring, may be included the power of recognising their own motives, passions, and frailties, when reproduced in the actions of others who happen to be their inferiors in station, or their juniors in years. When a lady and gentleman in love and small circumstances, for example, both agree in considering that the motive which makes them want to be married may reasonably reconcile them to the sacrifice of every advantage which they respectively enjoyed in their bachelor and spinster conditions, as well as to the risk of every social misfortune which may follow an imprudent marriage; and when they have been accordingly matrimonially associated together for life, it is by no means unusual to hear both husband and wife declare that they are highly astonished or extremely indignant, if their housemaid or cook happen to espouse a footman without prospects, or a green-grocer in a declining way of business. They can not possibly understand how the girl can have been so infatuated as to give up a good place where she was perfectly comfortable and was saving money, with the risk of starvation, ill-treatment, or desertion absolutely staring

her in the face all the time! The mistress laments over her imprudence with other married ladies, who cordially agree with her. The master appeals confidently, and not in vain, to other husbands to know if they ever before heard of such a fool in their lives. Suggest either to the lady or the gentleman, that John the footman and Jane the housemaid have only felt with their motives, acted with their passions, and obeyed, under the same circumstances, exactly the same human instincts which master and mistress have obeyed before them; and, ten to one, both husband and wife stare with astonishment and start simultaneously, as if they had been invested, for the first time in their lives, with eyesight enough to recognize themselves in the glass which is held up before them by the conduct of others.

So again with fathers and sons. How many parents are there who are capable of remembering what they were at twenty, when their sons happen to have arrived at that age? How many can be found who are able frankly to renew acquaintance, in memory only, with such juvenile indiscretions as their children's irregularities sometimes drag by main force of analogy from the convenient limbo of oblivion? How many fathers who feel violently irritated or deeply grieved at finding that their sons can not practically absorb, in the course of an hour or two, the whole flood of good advice poured upon them from the paternal reservoir of morality, which has only been fed to overflowing by the accumulations of many years, drawn from that stream of wisdom whose first source was experience; how many fathers, suffering under such parental disappointment as this, are clever enough to find consolation for the present, and hope and guidance for the future, in the remembrance that they themselves also, in their day, were oftentimes sadly shallow and leaky recipients of the full flow of paternal counsel? How many really possess a serviceable capacity of this kind; or, possessing, are able to employ it for their own advantage and the advantage of their children? About the same number, probably, which would also include the sum total of ladies and gentlemen who are sharp-sighted enough to recognize their own matrimonial motives, when exactly reflected before them in the marriage of their inferiors.

Now, although it must have appeared perfectly evident to anybody acquainted with Mr. Thorpe, even by sight only, that his character at twenty could not have resembled the character of his son at the same age, it is also equally certain, as a plain human fact, that Zack's father when a lad, and Zack's father when a gentleman of fifty, must have been, in many important respects, two very different individuals



The baits with which the devil fished for Mr. Thorpe at twenty, and for Mr. Thorpe's son after him, at those years, might have been different enough; but the one must have been allured—and caught, too, sometimes—by the special temptation which was proper to attract him, just as cleverly as the other was—caught, and perhaps thrown back into the infernal angler's well-stocked human preserves, to be neatly hooked again at some future period.

Had Mr. Thorpe any memory at all for the temptations which, as a fallible being, he must himself sometimes have succumbed to in his youth, on any of the numerous occasions when he passed merciless sentence of condemnation on the frailties of Zack? Did his power of making comparisons and tracing resemblances (though competent enough for all ordinary emergencies) ever help him to the discovery that, however different in degree his faults and his son's, as young men, might appear, the first motive causes, the original moral weaknesses which led to them, were, nevertheless, in virtue of their common human derivation of similar nature in both cases? Did he ever recognize any family likeness to past fallibilities of his own, in the fallibilities which led Zack astray into forbidden paths? Never: he was too busy in fighting blindly with results to look back into causes and into himself. His own conduct proved it, if nothing else did. For, whatever other paternal experiments he might try, he never once attempted the justest, the most merciful, and the most promising of all—the experiment of sometimes making allowances before he passed judgment on Zack.

A specimen has already been presented of his method of religiously educating his son, at six years old, by making him attend a church-service of two hours in length; as, also, of the manner in which he sought to drill the child into premature discipline by dint of sabbath-restrictions and select Bible texts. When that child grew to a boy, and when the boy developed to a young man, Mr. Thorpe's educational system still resolutely persisted in being what it had always been from the first. His idea of religion defined it to be a system of prohibitions; and, by a natural consequence, his idea of education defined *that* to be a system of prohibitions also.

He was not a man to pause for an instant at reducing theory to practice. He never distrusted himself; and what he thought it right to do, that he did, undismayed alike by logical confutation or practical ill result. His plan of bringing up his son once formed, no earthly consideration could move him from it an inch, one way or the other. He had two favorite phrases to answer every form of objection, every variety of reasoning, every citation of examples. No

matter with what arguments the members of Mrs. Thorpe's family from time to time assailed him, the same two replies were invariably shot back at them in turn from the parental quiver. Mr. Thorpe calmly—always calmly—said that he “would never compound with vice” (which, by-the-way, was what nobody asked him to do), and, secondly, that he would, in no instance, great or small, “consent to act from a principal of expediency:” this last assertion, in the case of Zack, being about equivalent to saying that, if he set out to walk due north, and met a lively young bull galloping with his head down due south, he would not consent to save his own bones, or yield the animal space enough to run on, by stepping aside a single inch in a lateral direction, east or west.

His system of education acted badly enough with Zack as a child; worse still with Zack as a boy at school; worst of all with Zack as a young man, just ready to accept a vocation for life. At this latter period of the son's career, the father's infatuated obstinacy claims especial attention; for at this period it produced the most fatal results.

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## CHAPTER XI.

### THE TRIBULATION OF ZACK.

NARROWNESS and intolerance were characteristic in various degrees of all Mr. Thorpe's opinions; and they especially distinguished his opinions on the sort of permanent occupation which he thought it desirable that his son should choose. Four professions which the general voice of the civilized world is accustomed to call honorable, he condemned in a breath. The army and navy were to be carefully shunned, because officers were often tempted to dissipation in quarters or in port. Medicine and law were equally inadmissible on high moral grounds; the first because it led the student to materialism and drunkenness; the second because it fostered infidelity by confusing the boundaries between right and wrong. Divinity was left as the last profession to choose, and the only profession of which Mr. Thorpe approved; provided always that it wrangled on his side of the question, and wrought to attain his favorite ends. The second place in his estimation was occupied by commerce; principally because many of his devout friends happened to be mercantile friends also. Beyond this he did not think it desirable to look. He had the hope of hoisting Zack up into the pulpit, and the resource, in case of failure, of jamming him down to the desk. What more could so practical-minded a parent possibly want?

But for the opposition of some clerical friends, who trembled naturally enough for the credit of their cloth, it is extremely probable that Mr. Thorpe—acting upon his favorite principle that he knew best what was good for his son—would actually have persisted in trying to force the lad into the church. Compelled to resign this project, under advice which he felt bound to respect, he chose the commercial alternative, as a matter of course; and from that second choice there was no appeal.

To say nothing of Zack's character as a child—to pass over entirely the whole tenor of his behavior as a boy at school—his mode of life at home, while waiting for the commercial situation to which he was destined, was of itself enough to have warned almost any father but Mr. Thorpe, that all the men of business in the British empire would utterly fail in turning the young gentleman to the smallest commercial account. His wild, restless energies, which had found vent at school in the cricket-field and the playground; in winning a fight one day, and leading the way into a desperate scrape the next; broke vigorously into a new outlet the moment he came home. His father at once forbade him the use of every London pleasure—the innocent as well as the guilty; but could not forbid him, by any form of veto short of a set of fetters, the use of his arms and legs for the stated purpose of healthful exercise. This was the manner in which Master Zack contrived to get the largest possible quantity of enjoyment out of the only privilege which he succeeded in wringing from the parental despotism of Mr. Thorpe.

He always began the day by rising at five o'clock, in gallant defiance of the cold and rainy autumn weather then prevailing. In three minutes he had huddled on all his clothes; in three more he had ravished from the larder as much bread, cheese, and cold meat, as his pockets would hold, and was ready to start for a morning wash in the Hampstead ponds. No matter what might be the condition of the atmosphere and the water, he stripped in the first, and dashed into the second, to swim for an appetite just as other men walk for it. His next process was to dry himself, in glorious independence of any such effeminacy as a towel, by skipping, tumbling, and jumping all round the margin of the pond, in the cold air: after which, he lightened his pockets luxuriously of a pound or so of provisions, by swallowing his breakfast meal. Having eaten his fill he was ready for a walk that generally averaged about twenty miles before he got home, meeting in the course of these pedestrian excursions with all sorts of adventures, which he was wise enough to keep secret from the paternal ears. Sometimes, in the vagabond variety of his rambles, he

lighted on a country fair; sometimes he roamed about with gipsies; sometimes he came up with a pack of hounds, and followed the hunt bravely on foot. No matter where he wandered, he talked to every man, woman, or child, who would listen to him. Gentlemen abandoned their reserve, and rogues forgot their suspicion, when he accosted them. He scraped acquaintance with horsemen in hunting-fields, and sat amicably with tinkers in dry ditches; just as much at his ease with the one set of companions as the other; and equally ready, in the high company or the low, to tell every body who cared to know it, all about his family affairs, and how badly he and his father agreed together. Pedlars, trampers, and laborers—squires, farmers, and publicans—all men were welcome alike to the cosmopolitan sympathies of Zack.

Such was the chaotic raw material out of which Mr. Thorpe proposed to create the various component parts necessary to the formation of an orderly commercial character!

Although old Mr. Goodworth had died before his grandson had left school, there were other members of his daughter's family left, who took interest enough in her son to expostulate seriously and often with Mr. Thorpe on his resolution to force Zack into a commercial career. They urged with perfect truth that the lad's mad spirits and inveterately roving disposition entirely unfitted him for all staid and regular pursuits. They entreated that his own wishes might at least be consulted by way of experiment, even though it should afterward appear impracticable to comply with them. They suggested getting him a good berth in the merchant navy, or attaching him to an exploring expedition in Australia, which was then talked of; or letting him join as volunteer on board the next ship destined for Arctic discovery—asserting that such adventurous employments as they proposed, or others resembling them, were alone fitted to suit his restless disposition, exercise his hardy physical powers, and familiarize him with useful and necessary discipline. Mr. Thorpe always listened to this sensible advice, often as it was reiterated, with unruffled composure and elaborate attention; admitted, with the slightest possible breath of sarcasm in his voice, that the schemes suggested might be perfectly wise and feasible in a worldly point of view, but added that he felt it his duty, definitely and without the smallest hesitation to reject them, from conscientious considerations connected, he deeply regretted to acknowledge, with the perilous spiritual condition of Zack.

"My son requires the most unremitting parental discipline and control," Mr. Thorpe used to say, by way of conclusion. "When he is not under my own eye at home, he



must be under the eyes of devout friends, in whom I can place unlimited confidence. One of those devout friends is ready to receive him into his counting-house, to accustom him to business habits and lucrative pursuits; to combat his rebellious disposition; to keep him industriously occupied from nine in the morning till six in the evening; to surround him with estimable examples; and, in short, to share with me the solemn responsibility of managing his whole moral and religious training. Persons who ask me to allow motives of this awfully important nature to be modified in the smallest degree by any considerations connected with his natural disposition (which has been a source of grief to me from his childhood); with his bodily gifts of the flesh (which have hitherto only served to keep him from the cultivation of the gifts or the spirit); or with his own desires (which I know by bitter experience to be all of the world worldly); persons, I say, who ask me to do any of these things, ask me also to act from a godless principle of expediency, and to violate moral rectitude by impiously compounding with vice."

At this point, on most occasions, when his projects for his son were assailed by hostile criticism, Mr. Thorpe cleared his throat, sighed, and looked steadfastly down on the floor—his wife put her handkerchief to her eyes—and his wife's relatives arose in a hurry, and acknowledged the force of the argument they had just heard, in two words, by saying—"Good morning."

The commercial situation (in a tea-broker's office) which Zack was now appointed to fill, was not expected to fall vacant for six weeks, or more. But he lost his liberty to roam the country from morning to night, on the very day when this place was secured to him. Mr. Thorpe considered it important that he should be drilled in his official exercise during all that remained of his leisure time at home; and resolved on engaging a tutor to instruct him in the art of book-keeping, and fill him brimful of arithmetical knowledge. Zack's natural want of the calculating capacity (he could never be got to learn the multiplication table), and consequent abhorrence of all that related to figures (he used to have his sums done for him at school by other boys), stimulated him to immediate rebellion against the proposed exercise of his father's authority. Mr. Thorpe said, with his usual brief decision and iron hardness of logic, that arithmetic was necessary to a commercial man—his son was about to become a commercial man—therefore his son must learn arithmetic. Having uttered this short formula, he considered that he had done quite enough to stop a perfect torrent of filial expostulation; and went calmly on with his letter to the arithmetical tutor, in-

forming that gentleman of the first day on which his attendance would be required in Baregrove square.

But Zack resisted and expostulated anew at every fresh scrape of his father's pen. He had no head for arithmetic (he said), and felt perfect horror at the bare idea of entering a tea-broker's office. Drudgery at a desk, and confinement from morning to night, would drive him mad. What had he done to be persecuted in this infamous way? (Here Mr. Thorpe carefully blotted the first page of the letter, and went on to the other side.) Why not let him learn to be a painter, like Mr. Blyth? Did they want to drive him to despair, and make him run away from home, by forcing him into the employment of all others that he hated the most? (Here Mrs. Thorpe said, "Oh, Zack, dear, hush—pray, pray, hush!") It was very well for mother to say "hush," when father was breaking his heart! Yes, breaking his heart! It was as good as doing that, to keep him from being out in the air and the daylight, working away, sunshine and shower, all jolly and hot, at something or other that he was fit for. Make him anything but a tea-broker—he didn't care what. If he might not be happy learning to sketch out of doors with dear old Valentine, let him be happy in some other line. Send him to a farmer, and let him be a country bumpkin for the rest of his days; pack him off to sea, as a sailor before the mast, if they liked; he could rough it with the best of them. Make a railway stoker of him, and only see how he would feed the engine! Banish him to some butcher's shop; he didn't care as long as he drove the cart. (Here Mr. Thorpe concluded his letter, and put it into an envelope.) Yes, rather than be shut up in a tea-shop and bullied into book-keeping, he would a thousand times sooner drive a butcher's cart—sooner sweep a crossing—sooner go of errands—sooner be an omnibus cad. (Mr. Thorpe directed the letter and put a stamp on it.) They might send the letter; but flesh and blood couldn't stand an arithmetical tutor—he warned them of that! (Mr. Thorpe looked at his watch—rang the bell—then, turning to Zack, said, "Prayers. Take your proper place, sir; and be silent, if you have any sense of common decency.") "Ah! prayers indeed!" (Here Zack muttered under his breath.) "I'm miserable enough to want praying for more than any other living soul in the world!" Mr. Thorpe put his letter on the sideboard, to be taken to the post the first thing in the morning. Mrs. Thorpe stealthily dried her eyes; Zack slunk off into a dark corner; the servants entered. Dead silence at last.

That night Mr. Thorpe little imagined how seriously his son was reflecting on the

propriety of running away from book-keeping, tea-broking, and home, the first thing in the morning. For once, Zack had not exaggerated in saying that his aversion to employment in a counting-house amounted to absolute horror. His physical peculiarities, and the habits which they had entailed on him from boyhood, made life in the open air and the constant use of his hardy muscles and sinews a constitutional necessity. He felt, and there was no self-delusion in the feeling, that he should mope and pine like a wild animal in a cage, under confinement in an office, only varied from morning to evening by commercial walking expeditions of a miserable mile or two in close and crowded streets. These forebodings—to say nothing of his natural yearning toward adventure, change of scene, and exhilarating bodily exertion—would have been sufficient of themselves to have decided him to leave his home, and battle his way through the world (he cared not where or how, so long as he battled it freely), but for one consideration which, bold as he was, unnerved him at heart, and stayed his feet on the brink of a sacred threshold which he dared not pass, perhaps to leave it behind him for ever—the threshold of his mother's door.

Strangely as it expressed itself, and irregularly as it influenced his conduct, Zack's love for his mother was, yet, in its own nature, a beautiful and admirable element in his character; full of promise for the future, if his father had been able to discover it, and wise enough to be guided by the discovery. As to outward expression, the lad's fondness for Mrs. Thorpe was a wild, boisterous, inconsiderate, unsentimental fondness, noisily in harmony with his thoughtless, rattle-pated disposition. It swayed him by fits and starts; influencing him nobly to patience and forbearance at one time; abandoning him, to all appearance, at another. But it was genuine ineradicable fondness, nevertheless, however often heedlessness and temptation might overpower the still small voice in which its pure impulses spoke to his conscience, and pleaded with his heart.

Nothing that Zack did was more thoroughly characteristic of him than his manner of testifying his affection for his mother, generally on those occasions when she used to entreat him in private to pay attention to his father's wishes for her sake. Showers of loud, hearty kisses, which took away the poor lady's breath; vigorous, romping embraces, which half frightened, half hurt her, though she would never confess it; loud-voiced, filial admiration, as ignorant as it was sincere, of all her little, favorite, and modest ornaments of dress: voluble nursery terms of endearment, so absurd, and at the same time so simply touching,

when uttered by a sturdy son full six feet high, that the mother often laughed and cried in the same breath while she listened to them: these were some among the roughly-honest varieties of outward form in which, from time to time, Zack's filial affection delighted to express itself: these were the wonted guaranties (always given with perfect honesty of intention at the time) under which his promises of reformation bound themselves to ripen into performances that should last for ever.

But it was the lad's misfortune to be gifted with more than his due share of the human frailty which, in different proportions, we all inherit from our common mortality. Rarely, very rarely, did the design and the fulfilment correspond, in his case, as they should. Often, however, as the enjoyments of the present misled him into forgetfulness of past engagements, and inattention to future consequences, there were periods in his life when the remembrance of his mother, and of all that he had promised to do for her sake, recurred to his memory, touched his heart, and saved him at the right crisis from the commission of many a fault, the consequences of which might have proved fatal to him for the rest of his days.

Twice had he set forth to run away from school; and twice had the loving recollection of his duty to his mother stopped him in full career, and sent him back, a self-convicted deserter, to suffer heroically under the avenging birch. Over and over again, in his wanderings about the country, was he sorely tempted to stay out all night with poachers and gipsies, or to stop for the evening dancing in the booths at a fair; but the dread of inflicting on his mother the misery of anxiety and suspense which his absence would be sure to cause her, was always powerful enough to turn his truant steps homeward, and bring him back at the appointed hour in the evening, obedient to domestic regulations for her sake.

And, even when severer trials assailed his fortitude—even when the abhorrent presence of the arithmetical tutor first darkened the doors of Baregrove square—Zack let Mrs. Thorpe wile him into submission at the eleventh hour. And again, when the place in the tea-broker's office was vacant, if his mother had not coaxed, cried, and persuaded as only a mother could, nothing short of absolute force (and a very considerable exertion of it, too) would have led him an inch in the hated direction of the office-stool. These domestic victories, which Mr. Thorpe complacently attributed entirely to his own firmness, the secret exercise of Mrs. Thorpe's influence effected in spite of every obstacle; but more than this, even her unremitting exertions could not achieve. They could not allure the lad



into liking an employment for which he was essentially unfit, and which he secretly loathed and execrated with all his heart. Day by day—even hour by hour—his stored-up hatred of his city occupations accumulated at compound interest. Night after night, as he tossed restlessly on his bed, or lolled out of window, smoking the proscribed cigar, did the familiar and fatal temptation to turn his back unceremoniously on home and home-troubles, increase its seductions, and, treacherously taking advantage of his own sense of the wrong inflicted on him, grow stronger and stronger in the conflict with the one good influence which still strove against it, weakly but resolutely to the very last.

Among other unlucky results of Mr. Thorpe's conscientious imprisonment of his son in a merchant's office, was the vast increase which Zack's commercial penance produced in his natural appetite for the amusements and dissipations of the town. After nine hours of the most ungrateful daily labor that could well have been inflicted on him, the sight of play-bills and other wayside advertisements of places of public recreation appealed to him every evening, on his way home, with irresistible fascination. Almost in every street that he passed through, with wandering eyes and lounging gait, siren voices sang around him of public gayeties from placarded shop-doors and various-papered boardings: Come, melancholy and discontented youth (murmured the dulcet accents through interstices of red, blue, or green letters of invitation); come, and forget the tribulations of the day, the murky realities of commercial life, in our brilliant fairy-land of glitter and gas! Come, and polk with our nymphs to the music of far-famed bands; laugh with our swains at comedy and farce, and slang in slipshod rhyme, miscalled burlesque. Come, quaff at gin and water's balmy fount; fatten delectably on chops and steaks; toss but some paltry shillings here and there; and lo! the hades of your business hours shall change forthwith to paradise at night!

Such was the constant even-song which murmured companionably to Zack on his homeward way. But mingling always with those melodious sounds, and striving cruelly to mar their sweetness, there growled, threatening and harsh, a horrent accompanying discord—the voice of relentless prohibition that issued from the paternal lips.

Mr. Thorpe drew the line of demarcation between permissible and forbidden evening recreations at the lecture-room of the royal and polytechnic institutions, and the oratorio performances in Exeter hall. All gates opening on the outer side of the boundary thus laid down, were gates of vice—gates that no son of his should ever be allowed

to pass. The domestic laws which obliged Zack to be home every night at eleven o'clock, and forbade the possession of a latch-key, were directed especially to the purpose of closing up against him the forbidden entrances to theatres and public gardens—places of resort which Mr. Thorpe described, in a strain of devout allegory, as "devil's houses" and "labyrinths of national infamy." It was perfectly useless to suggest to the father (as some of Zack's maternal relatives did suggest to him) that the son was originally descended from Eve, and was consequently possessed of an hereditary tendency to pluck at forbidden fruit; that his disposition and age made it next to a certainty, that if he were restrained from enjoying openly the amusements naturally most attractive to him, he would end in enjoying them by stealth; and that the habits of deceit so engendered would be the habits of all others most likely, by blunting his moral sensibilities, to lead him into abusing the recreations which experience, if not precept, might otherwise teach him how to use. It was quite fruitless to address arguments of this kind to Mr. Thorpe. He answered them all by registering his usual protest against "expediency" and "compounding with vice;" and then drew the reins of discipline tighter than ever, by way of warning off all intrusive hands from attempting to relax them for the future.

Before long, the evil results predicted by the opponents of Mr. Thorpe's plan for preventing his son from indulging in public amusements, actually occurred. At first, Zack gratified his taste for the drama, by going to the theatre whenever he felt inclined; leaving the performances early enough to get home by eleven o'clock, and candidly acknowledging how he had occupied the evening, when the question was asked at breakfast the next morning. This frankness of confession was always rewarded by rebukes, threats, and reiterated prohibitions, administered by Mr. Thorpe with a calm and pitiless severity, as imperially paternal dignity of manner, and a crushing assumption of superiority to every mitigating argument, entreaty, or excuse, that his son could urge, which often irritated Zack into answering defiantly, and recklessly repeating his offence. Finding that all menaces and reproofs only ended in making the lad ill-tempered and insubordinate for days together, Mr. Thorpe so far distrusted his own powers of correction as to call in the aid of his prime clerical adviser, the Reverend Aaron Yollop, under whose ministry he sat, and whose portrait in lithograph hung in the best light on the dining-room wall at Baregrove square.

Mr. Yollop's interference was at least weighty enough to produce a positive and

immediate result; it drove Zack to the very last limits of human endurance. The reverend gentleman's imperious self-possession defied the young rebel's utmost powers of irritating reply, no matter how vigorously he might exert them. Once vested with the paternal commission to rebuke, prohibit, and lecture, as the spiritual pastor and master of Mr. Thorpe's disobedient son, Mr. Yollop flourished in his new vocation in exact proportion to the resistance offered to the exercise of his authority. He derived a grim encouragement, he gathered a melancholy fullness of enjoyment from the wildest explosions of Zack's fury at being interfered with by a man who had no claim of relationship over him, and who gloried, professionally, in experimenting on him, as a finely-complicated case of spiritual disease. Thrice did Mr. Yollop, in his capacity of a moral surgeon, operate on his patient, and triumph in the responsive yells which his curative exertions elicited. At the fourth visit of attendance, however, every angry symptom of disease suddenly and marvellously disappeared before the first significant flourish of the clerical knife. Mr. Yollop had triumphed where Mr. Thorpe had failed! The case which had defied lay-treatment had yielded to the parsonic process of cure; and Zack, the rebellious, was tamed at last into spending his evenings in decorous dullness at home!

It never occurred to Mr. Yollop to doubt, or to Mr. Thorpe to ascertain, whether the young gentleman really went to bed, after he had retired obediently at the proper hour, to his sleeping-room. They saw him come home from business sullenly docile and speechlessly subdued, take his dinner and his book in the evening, and go up-stairs quietly, after the house-door had been bolted for the night. They saw him thus acknowledge, by every outward proof, that he was crushed into thorough submission; and the sight satisfied them, to their hearts' content. No men are so short-sighted as persecuting men. Both Mr. Thorpe and his coadjutor were persecutors on principle, wherever they encountered opposition; and both were consequently incapable of looking beyond immediate results. The sad truth was, however, that they had done something more than discipline the lad. They had fairly worried his native virtues of frankness and fair-dealing out of his heart; they had beaten him back, inch by inch, into the miry refuge of sheer duplicity. Zack was deceiving them both.

His sudden submission to his clerical assailant was not the impulse of the moment, but the result of previous reflection on the best method of silencing his father and getting rid of Mr. Yollop. To attain these ends he was reduced—or, rather, he thought

himself reduced—to a choice between two alternatives; flight or dissimulation. He would not have hesitated a moment at adopting the first, but for his mother. She had been more than usually kind, tender, and compassionate toward him (in secret of course) since the increase of his domestic tribulations; and he could not summon the cruel resolution to leave her by leaving home. The second alternative was all, therefore, that remained; for, at his age, and with his temperament—bound down, too, as he was, to an occupation which made the day hateful to him—the idea of ending all his difficulties by paying implicit obedience to orders, and wholly abstaining for the future from the only evening amusements that procured him a few hours of happiness to compensate for many hours of gloom, presented itself to his mind in the light of a sheer impossibility. The second alternative was accordingly the alternative that he chose; and once thus decided, he soon hit on a notable plan for enjoying in secret the forbidden diversions of "London life," and at the same time sustaining his good character under the deluded supervision of the reverend Aaron Yollop.

Eleven o'clock was the family hour for going to bed, at Baregrove square. Zack's first proceeding on entering his room was to open his window softly, put on an old travelling cap, and light a cigar. It was December weather at that time; but his swimming practice in the Hampstead ponds rendered him as impervious to cold as a young Polar bear. Having smoked quietly for half an hour, he listened at his door till the silence in Mr. Thorpe's dressing-room below assured him that his father was safe in bed, and invited him to descend on tiptoe, with his boots under his arm, into the hall. Here he placed his candle, with a box of matches by it, on a chair, and proceeded to open the house-door with the noiseless dexterity of a practised burglar—being always careful to facilitate the safe performance of this dangerous operation by keeping lock, bolt, and hinges, well oiled. Having secured the key, blown out the candle, and noiselessly closed the door behind him, he left the house, and started for the Haymarket, Covent Garden, or the Strand, a little before midnight—or, in other words, set forth on a nocturnal tour of amusement, just at the time when the doors of respectable places of public recreation, which his father prevented him from attending, were all closed, and the doors of disreputable places all thrown open.

One precaution, and one only, did Zack observe while enjoying the dangerous diversions into which paternal prohibitions, assisted by filial perversity, now thrust him headlong. He took care to keep sober enough to be sure of getting home before



the servants had risen, and to be certain of preserving his steadiness of hand and stealthiness of foot, while bolting the door and stealing up-stairs for an hour or two of bed. Knowledge of his own perilous weakness of brain, as a drinker, rendered him thus uncharacteristically temperate and self-restrained, so far as indulgence in strong liquor was concerned. His first glass of grog comforted him; his second agreeably excited him; his third (as he knew by former experience) reached his weak point on a sudden, and robbed him treacherously of his sobriety.

Gallantly as he had hitherto resisted its allurements, in the constant temptation to excess offered by this third glass, lurked the great danger of self-betrayal and consequent discovery that lay in ambush for Zack; waiting to get the better of his frailty as other temptations had got the better of it already. Three or four times a week, for nearly a month, had he now enjoyed his unhallowed nocturnal rambles with perfect impunity; keeping them secret even from his friend Mr. Blyth, whose toleration, expansive as it was, he well knew would not extend to viewing leniently such offences as haunting night-houses at two in the morning, while his father believed him to be safe in bed. His misconduct, recklessly as he persevered in it, had, however, not yet produced the last, worst result of deteriorating him beyond all chance of reformation. He had still grace enough left to feel ashamed of his own successful duplicity, when he was in his mother's presence.

But circumstances unhappily kept him too much apart from Mrs. Thorpe, and so prevented the natural growth of a good feeling, which flourished only under her influence; and which, had it been suffered to arrive at maturity, might have led to his reform. All day he was at the office, and his irksome life there only inclined him to look forward with malicious triumph to the secret frolic of the night. Then, in the evening, Mr. Thorpe often thought it advisable to harangue him seriously, by way of not letting the reformed rake relapse for want of a little encouraging admonition of the moral sort. Nor was Mr. Yollop at all behindhand in taking similar precautions to secure the new convert permanently, after having once caught him. Every word these two gentlemen spoke only served to harden the lad afresh, and to deaden the reproving and reclaiming influence of his mother's affectionate looks and confiding words. "I should get nothing by it, even if I could turn over a new leaf," thought Zack, shrewdly and angrily, when his father or his father's friend favored him with a little improving advice: "Here they are, worrying away again already at their pattern good boy, to make him a better."

Such was the point at which the tribulations of Zack had arrived: such the trials he was suffering, and the offences he was committing; and such the doubtful nature of his relations with home, at the period when that sanguine artist, Mr. Valentine Blyth, resolved to set up a domestic drawing academy in his wife's room, with the double purpose of amusing his family circle in the evening, and teaching his wild young friend to be steady by teaching him to draw from plaster casts.

## CHAPTER XII.

### A FAMILY DRAWING ACADEMY.

ALTHOUGH the most indolent and easy-minded of men, in dealing with the ordinary occupations and interests of existence, Mr. Blyth was impetuosity itself—a very Hotspur among painters—in all that related to his art. Whatever professional plans he might form, he never rested until he had either thoroughly succeeded, or thoroughly failed in executing them on the spot. If he had been at liberty to consult his own feelings, and to exert himself without reference to others, his morning-dream of a domestic drawing academy would have been realized the same evening, by the establishment of a family school in full working order for the three scholars whom it was alone designed to accommodate—Mrs. Blyth, Madonna, and Zack.

But one great purpose to be achieved by Valentine's project, was the amusement of his invalid wife during the long winter evenings. Lavinia's comfort and convenience were, therefore, to be consulted, as the first and foremost of all considerations. Anxious as she was to witness the establishment of the new academy in her room, it so chanced that the variable influences of Mrs. Blyth's malady on her general health were especially unpropitious to the immediate inauguration of her husband's evening drawing-school. She had her days of weakness and her days of strength; and it was necessary to wait patiently for the latter, before she could be allowed to exert herself in the smallest degree. It was only after a week of delay that a note could be safely despatched to Baregrove square, inviting Zack to receive the first of the series of drawing lessons which Valentine had promised to give him, on the occasion of his last visit to the studio.

When Mr. Blyth rested at last from his labors of collection and arrangement; and, looking gayly around him in "Lavinie's drawing-room," saw that all the preparations for the first evening of his domestic academy were complete, he was beyond

comparison the most innocently proud and genuinely happy man then in existence. And he had ample cause to feel elated, as he viewed the home-prospect surrounding him. Even the veriest stranger must have been morose and miserable indeed, if he could have entered Mrs. Blyth's room without feeling the happier for all that he saw, no matter in what direction his eyes might wander. There was, in truth, but one object visible in the whole range of the apartment which it was not a pleasure to look at—and this was the plaster head which Valentine had incomprehensibly selected, as the best model that his three scholars could draw from. It was a cast taken from the tortured and terrible face of the centre figure, in that grand group of a father and two sons struggling in the folds of an enormous serpent, which we know in these modern days by the title of the "Laocoon."

By throwing down a partition-wall, Mrs. Blyth's room had been so enlarged, as to extend along the whole breadth of one side of the house, measuring from the front to the back garden windows. Considerable as the space was which had been thus obtained, every part of it from floor to ceiling was occupied by objects of beauty proper to the sphere in which they were placed; some, solid and serviceable, where usefulness was demanded; others light and elegant, where ornament alone was necessary—and all won gloriously by Valentine's brush; by the long, loving, unselfish industry of many years. From the airy and glittering little chandelier that lit the room by night, to the glossy leopard-skin rug that shone before the shining fireplace; from the garden under glass in one recess, to the tender-tinted satin-wood cabinet in another; from the carpet, whose rich green and brown hues mingled together in sober and perfect harmony of color, to the cornice with its delicate tracery of vine-leaves and tendrils painted from nature—every object in the room told its mistress the same simple household story of watchful sympathy that never slumbered, and generous affection that never changed; or wrote on her heart the same touching record of sacrifices gladly undertaken, of trials cheerfully borne, of hard-won rewards gratefully prized, for the one noble purpose of making the sanctuary of the sick chamber a shrine for the choicest offerings, as well as an altar for the most earnest prayers.

Mrs. Blyth's bed, like everything else that she used in her room, was so arranged as to offer her the most perfect comfort and luxury attainable in her suffering condition. The framework was broad enough to include within its dimensions a couch for day and a bed for night. Her reading easel and work-table could be moved within reach, in whatever position she lay. Immediately

above her hung an extraordinary complication of loose cords, which ran through ornamental pulleys of the quaintest kind, fixed at different places in the ceiling, and communicating with the bell, the door, and a pane of glass in the window which opened easily on hinges. These were Valentine's own contrivances for enabling his wife to summon attendance, admit visitors, and regulate the temperature of her room at will, by merely pulling at any one of the loops hanging within reach of her hand, and neatly labelled with ivory tablets, inscribed "Bell," "Door," "Window." The cords comprising this rigging for invalid use were at least five times more numerous than was necessary for the purpose they were designed to serve; but Mrs. Blyth would never allow them to be simplified by dexterous hands. Clumsy as their arrangement might appear to others, in her eyes it was without a fault: every useless cord was sacred from the reforming knife, for Valentine's sake.

Looking at her face, as she now lay on the couch side of the bed, talking to her husband, or writing on Madonna's slate, while the deaf and dumb girl sat by her, it was not easy to associate the idea of long confinement and suffering either with her voice, her manner, or her look. Pitilessly as disease had set its profaning traces on her face, the expression of her features defied the worst ravages of the spoiler living on in the glad vitality of its own beauty, the one visible portion of her frail life unenfeebled and unchanged. The hollow might be now in her cheek, where the dimple once had been; the bloom of her complexion and the vivacity of her dark eyes might have died away sadly, as the withering breath of sickness passed over them—but the expression still shone out with a bright happiness of modest courage and deathless hope, which covered as with a veil of sunshine, all that was now worn and wasted in the tender face.

Inprisoned to one room, as she had now been for years, she had not lost her natural womanly interest in the little occupations and events of household life. From the studio to the kitchen, she managed every day, through channels of communication invented by herself, to find out the latest domestic news; to be present in spirit at least, if not in body, at family consultations which could not take place in her room; to know exactly how her husband was getting on down-stairs with his pictures; to rectify in time any omission of which Mr. Blyth or Madonna might be guilty in making the dinner arrangements, or in sending orders to trades-people; to keep the servants attentive to their work, and to indulge or control them, as the occasion might require. Neither by look nor manner did she betray any of the sullen listlessness or fretful



patience sometimes attendant on long, incurable illness. Her voice, low as its tones were, was always cheerful, and varied musically and pleasantly with her varying thoughts. On her days of weakness, when she suffered much under her malady, she was accustomed to be quite still and quiet, and to keep her room darkened—these being the only signs by which any increase in her disorder could be detected by those about her. She never complained when the bad symptoms came on; and never voluntarily admitted, even on being questioned, that the spine was more painful to her than usual.

She was dressed very prettily for the opening night of the drawing academy, wearing a delicate lace cap, and a new silk gown of Valentine's choosing, made full enough to hide the emaciation of her figure. Her husband's love, faithful through all affliction and change to the girlish image of its first worship, still affectionately exacted from her as much attention to the graces and luxuries of dress as she might have bestowed on them of her own accord, in the best and gayest days of youth and health. She had never looked happier and better in any new gown than in that, which Mr. Blyth had insisted on giving her, to commemorate the establishment of the domestic drawing-school in her own room.

Seven o'clock had been fixed as the hour at which the business of the academy was to begin. Always punctual, wherever his professional engagements were concerned, Valentine put the finishing touch to his preparations, as the clock struck; and perching himself gayly on a corner of Mrs. Blyth's couch, surveyed his drawing-boards, his lamps, and his plaster cast from the "Laocoon," with bland artistic triumph.

"Now, Lavvie," said he, "before Zack comes and confuses me (which he's certain to do), I'll just check off all the drawing things one after another, to make sure that nothing's left down-stairs in the studio, that ought to be up here."

As her husband said these words, Mrs. Blyth touched Madonna gently on the shoulder. For some little time the girl had been sitting thoughtfully, with her head bent down, her cheek resting on her hand, and a bright smile just parting her lips very prettily. The affliction which separated her from the worlds of hearing and speech—which set her apart among her fellow-creatures, a solitary living being in a sphere of death-silence that others might approach, but might never enter—gave a touching significance to the deep, meditative stillness that often passed over her suddenly, even in the society of her adopted parents, and of friends who were all talking around her. Sometimes the thoughts by which she was thus absorbed—

thoughts only indicated to others by the shadow of their mysterious presence, moving in the expressions that passed over her face—held her long under their influence: sometimes, they seemed to die away in her mind almost as suddenly as they had arisen to life in it. It was one of Valentine's many eccentric fancies that she was not meditating only, at such times as these, but that, deaf and dumb as she was with the creatures of this world, she could talk with the angels, and could hear what the heavenly voices said to her in return.

The moment she was touched on the shoulder, she looked up, and nestled close to her adopted mother; who, passing one arm round her neck, explained to her, by means of the manual signs of the deaf and dumb alphabet, what Valentine was saying at that moment.

Nothing was more characteristic of Mrs. Blyth's warm sympathies and affectionate consideration for Madonna than this little action. The kindest people rarely think it necessary, however well practised in communicating by the fingers with the deaf, to keep them informed of any ordinary conversation which may be proceeding in their presence. Wise disquisitions, witty sayings, curious stories, are conveyed to their minds by sympathizing friends and relatives, as a matter of course; but the little chatty nothings of everyday talk, which most pleasantly and constantly employ our speaking, and address our hearing faculties, are thought too slight and fugitive in their nature to be worthy of transmission by interpreting fingers or pens, and are consequently seldom or never communicated to the deaf. No deprivation attending their affliction is more severely felt by them than the special deprivation which thus ensues, and which exiles their sympathies, in a great measure, from all share in the familiar social interests of life around them.

Mrs. Blyth's kind heart, quick intelligence, and devoted affection for her adopted child, had long since impressed it on her, as the first of duties and pleasures, to prevent Madonna from feeling the excluding influences of her calamity, while in the society of others, by keeping her well informed of every one of the many conversations, whether jesting or earnest, that were held in her presence, in the invalid-room. For years and years past, Mrs. Blyth's nimble fingers had been accustomed to interpret all that was said by her bedside before the deaf and dumb girl, as they were interpreting for her now.

"Just stop me, Lavvie, if I miss anything out, in making sure that I've got all that's wanted for everybody's drawing lesson," said Valentine, looking admiringly at the cast from the "Laocoon," and preparing to reckon up the list of his materials.

correctly, by placing his right forefinger on his left thumb. "First, there's the head that all my students are to draw from—the glorious Larkoon!" (This was how he pronounced the classical proper name.) "Secondly—"

"But, Valentine dear," interposed Mrs. Blyth, her fingers forming the words round Madonna's neck almost as fast as she spoke them, "why do you choose that dreadful, dying face for us to copy from? My father thinks that all art which only shocks and horrifies those whom it addresses, is art perverted from its right use; and I really can't help agreeing with him when I look at that face; though I know all the time that you must be the best judge."

One of Mrs. Blyth's peculiarities was a habit of constantly referring to her father's opinions and to the prints that he had produced, whenever the conversation ran on art; and, sometimes, even after art had been exchanged for other topics. She was the poor engraver's favorite child, and while he had her at home, was the only member of the family to whom he ventured to confide all his cherished projects, all the hopes and triumphs connected with his pursuit. Like many other shy, nervous, gentle-hearted men born to obscurity, he was secretly ambitious of attaining the noisiest glories of celebrity. His simple yearnings to become famous in his profession, his innocent self-glorification after a good day's work, his pride at seeing his name mentioned now and then in a newspaper, when a print from his graver got critical notice, his own private opinions about great painters, living and dead, were all addressed secretly to his pretty Lavinia. She was the only being in the little world of his daily existence who was ever ready and pleased to hear all the talk about art that was in him, and that he dare not let out to gruff publishers, who made it a favor to employ him—to famous painters whose valuable time he could not venture to occupy—to his wife, who thought most highly of him as an engraver on the rare occasions when he was ready with her allowance for the weekly bills. Thus Mrs. Blyth grew up from an early age in the affectionate conviction that her father was a neglected genius, and that his unappreciated notions on art were so many great original ideas lost to posterity. She never to the last abandoned her early faith in him, or thought of overcoming the habit she had of vindicating that faith by quoting his opinions incessantly to everybody who visited the house.

"I honor your father's principles, my love," said Mr. Blyth, in answer to his wife's objection; "I honor his principles, and admire his practice." (Mrs. Blyth looked gratefully toward the wall on which

her father's prints hung, all framed under Valentine's directions, and arranged by Valentine's own hands.) "I will even go further, Lavvie, and confess that I am delighted to hear you say you think the face of the Larkoon horrifying, for I chose it for the model to-night with the express purpose of horrifying Zack."

Madonna's blue eyes opened wide in astonishment, as these words were interpreted to her. Mrs. Blyth smiled at the idea of horrifying such a person as Mr. Zachary Thorpe, junior, with a plaster-cast.

"Zack is flighty, inattentive, and so ignorant of art that I doubt even whether he knows I am referring to classical sculpture when I speak to him about the antique," pursued Valentine. "Now, when such a student as he is begins to learn to draw, I have no hesitation in saying that, unless the antique crushes him at first sight into a sort of awe-struck submission to art, the antique won't get him to study from it with the slightest attention for five minutes together. He wants a model to draw from that will keep him quiet by making him shiver in his shoes the moment he looks at it. The Larkoon in the agonies of death I consider to be just the sort of caste to make a beginner's flesh creep: therefore, the Larkoon is the very thing we want for Zack."

"Don't you think he will find it too difficult to copy from at a first lesson?" asked Mrs. Blyth. "My father used always to say that young engravers—but I suppose drawing from the antique is a different thing."

"Zack shall find nothing difficult if he will only stick to my instructions," said Blyth, confidently. "But he will be here directly, before I have got through checking off all the things I've brought from the painting-room. Let me see, where was I when I began? Oh! at the Larkoon. Very good. First, the plaster-cast," said Valentine, beginning once more, and again making a cipher of his left thumb. "Second, two chairs put at the right points of view. The chair with the front view for Madonna; the chair with the profile view for Zack, because it's the easiest. The three-quarter view, my love, I reserve for you, just as you see it now, because it's the best, and I want yours to be the best drawing. Fourthly—"

"You haven't got to thirdly, yet, Valentine dear," suggested Mrs. Blyth.

"No more I have! Thirdly, of course Thirdly, the—the what? Do you know I'm getting a little confused already, almost as if I couldn't quite make out what I ought to check off next. Curious, isn't it?"

"Have you got the port-crayons?" asked Mrs. Blyth.

"To be sure! Thirdly, the port-crayons of course. Oh, good gracious! where can I



have] at the port-crayons?" And Mr. Blyth began to hunt for the lost articles, as usual, in the wrong places. Mrs. Blyth made a sign to Madonna, who found them all huddled together behind the cast. "Thirdly, the port-crayons," reiterated Valentine, kissing her in triumph, as she presented them to him. "The port-crayons, and the black and white chalk all cut ready to a point, with a double allowance to Zack, because he's sure to be breaking his points all the evening. Fourthly—now I've got to fourthly, Lavvie: I feel all right. Stop, though; it oughtn't to be the lamps; it ought to be something small and likely to be forgotten. Fourthly, three drawing-boards—no, they're the biggest things of all. Paper? No, it's stuck on the drawing-boards; the thickest bit for Zack, because he's certain to rub out every line he does for the first half hour. Fourthly—Lavvie! I've forgotten something important; and I don't in the least know what it is," exclaimed Mr. Blyth in a lamentable voice, looking all round him in extreme perplexity and dismay.

"Not the muffins you promised Zack for tea, I hope," said Mrs. Blyth, laughing.

"Fourthly, muffins!" cried Valentine, briskly; "not that they're forgotten, by any means, for I've ordered in enough to suffocate every soul in the house—but it's a blessing to have something at last that will do for fourthly, and get one on again to fifthly. But fifthly what? There's the difficulty. What *can* I have forgotten? Do try and think, my dear. It's something that everybody wants for drawing."

"Bread-crumbs to rub out with," suggested Mrs. Blyth, after a moment's consideration.

"That's it!" exclaimed Valentine, ecstatically. "I've left all the bread-crumbs down-stairs in the painting-room. No, no, don't trouble Madonna to go after it. She don't know where it is. Tell her to poke the fire instead; I'll be back directly." And Mr. Blyth skipped out of the room as nimbly as if he had been fifteen instead of fifty.

No sooner was Valentine's back turned, than Mrs. Blyth's hand was passed under the pretty swan's-down coverlet that lay over her couch, as if in search of something hidden beneath it. In a moment the hand reappeared, holding a chalk-drawing very lightly and neatly framed. It was Madonna's copy from the head of the Venus de Medici—the same copy which Zack had honored with his most superlative exaggeration of praise at his last visit to the studio. She had not since forgotten, or altered, her purpose of making him a present of the drawing which he had admired so much. It had been finished with the utmost care and completeness which she

could bestow upon it; had been put into a very pretty frame, which she had paid for out of her own little savings of pocket-money; and was now hidden under Mrs. Blyth's coverlet, to be drawn forth as a grand surprise for Zack, and for Valentine too, on that very evening.

After looking once or twice backward and forward between the copyist and the copy, her pale, kind face beaming with the quiet merriment that overspread it, Mrs. Blyth laid down the drawing, and began talking with her fingers to Madonna.

"So you will not even let me tell Valentine who this is a present for?" were the first words which she signed.

The girl was sitting with her back half turned on the drawing; glancing at it quickly from time to time with a strange shyness and indecision, as if the work of her own hands had undergone some transformation which made her doubt whether she was any longer privileged to look at it. She shook her head in reply to the question just put to her, then moved round suddenly on her chair—her fingers playing nervously with the fringes of the coverlet at her side.

"We all like Zack," proceeded Mrs. Blyth, enjoying the amusement which her womanly instincts extracted from Madonna's confusion; "but you must like him very much, love, to take more pains with this particular drawing than with any drawing you ever did before."

This time Madonna neither looked up nor moved an inch in her chair, her fingers working more and more nervously amid the fringe; her treacherous cheeks, neck, and bosom, answered for her.

Mrs. Blyth touched her shoulder gayly, and, after placing the drawing again under the coverlet, made her look up, while signing these words:—

"I shall give the drawing to Zack very soon after he comes in. It is sure to make him happy for the rest of the evening, and fonder of you than ever."

Madonna's eyes followed Mrs. Blyth's fingers eagerly to the last letter they formed; then rose softly to her face with the same wistful questioning look which they had assumed before Valentine, years and years ago, when he first interfered to protect her in the travelling circus. There was such an irresistible tenderness in the faint smile that wavered about her lips; such a sadness of innocent beauty in her face, now growing a shade paler than it was wont to be, that Mrs. Blyth's expression became serious the instant their eyes met. She drew the girl forward and kissed her. The kiss was returned many times, with a passionate warmth and eagerness remarkably at variance with the usual gentleness of all Madonna's actions. What had changed her thus? Before it was possible to inquire of

to think, she had broken away from the kind arms that were round her, and was kneeling with her face hidden in the pillows that lay over the head of the couch.

"I must quiet her directly. I ought to make her feel that this is wrong," said Mrs. Blyth to herself, looking startled and grieved as she withdrew her hand wet with tears, after trying vainly to raise the girl's face from the pillows. "She has been thinking too much lately—too much about that drawing—too much, I am afraid, about Zack."

Just at that moment Mr. Blyth opened the door. Feeling the slight shock, as he let it bang to after entering, Madonna instantly started up and ran to the fireplace. Valentine did not notice her when he came in.

He bustled about the neighborhood of the plaster-cast, talking incessantly, arranging his lumps of bread-crumbs by the drawing-boards, and trimming the lamps that lit the model. Mrs. Blyth cast many an anxious look toward the fireplace. After the lapse of a few minutes, Madonna turned round and came back to the couch. The traces of tears had almost entirely departed from her face. She made a little appealing gesture that asked Mrs. Blyth to be silent about what had happened while they were alone; kissed, as a sign that she wished to be forgiven, the hand that was held out to her; and then sat down quietly again in her accustomed place.

"Fifthly, the bread-crumbs," said Mr. Blyth, proceeding, undaunted by previous failures, with his enumeration of all the materials he had collected up-stairs.

"Sixthly, the—oh, Lord! it's no use going on now. There's Zack."

As he spoke, a loud voice was heard calling down the kitchen-stairs from the hall—adjoining the cook to speak the truth, and say whether muffins had really been ordered for tea. Then followed a long whispering, succeeded by a burst of giggling from the housemaid, who presently ascended to Mrs. Blyth's room alone, and entered, after a brief explosion of suppressed laughter behind the door, holding out at arm's length a pair of those puffy wash-leather dumpings, known to the pugilistic world by the name of boxing-gloves.

"If you please, sir," said the girl, addressing Valentine, and tittering hysterically at every third word, "Master Zack's down stairs on the landing, and he says you're to be so kind as put on those things (he's putting another pair on hisself), and give him the pleasure of your company for a few minutes in the painting-room."

"Come on, Blyth," cried the voice from the stairs. "I told you I should bring the gloves, and teach you to box, last time I was here, you know. Come on! I only want to open your chest by knocking you

about a little in the painting-room before we begin to draw."

The servant still held the gloves away from her, at the full stretch of her arm, as if she feared they were yet alive with the pugilistic energies that had been imparted to them by their last wearer. Mrs. Blyth burst out laughing. Valentine followed her example. The housemaid began to look bewildered, and begged to know if her master would be so kind as to take "the things" away from her.

"Did you say, come up-stairs?" continued the voice outside. "Ali right. I have no objection if Mrs. Blyth hasn't. Here Zack came in with the gloves on, 'squaring' on the most approved prize-fighter principles as he advanced. 'Put 'em on, Blyth! These are the pills for that sluggish old liver of yours that you're always complaining of. What are you laughing about? Left leg forward—right leg easily bent—steady—and keep your eye on me! Don't talk, but put 'em on. I'll teach you the science of counter-hitting at the first lesson. Splendid system! Owen Swift invented it, and killed—'"

"Hold your tongue!" cried Mr. Blyth, at last recovering breath enough to assert his dignity as master of the new drawing-school.

"Take off those things directly! What do you mean, sir, by coming into my academy, which is devoted to the peaceful arts, in the attitude of a prize-fighter?"

"Don't lose your temper, old fellow," rejoined Zack; "you will never learn to use your fists prettily if you do. Here, Patty, the boxing lesson's put off till to-morrow. Take the gloves up-stairs into your master's dressing-room, and pop them into the drawer where his clean shirts are, because they must be kept nice and dry. Shake hands, Mrs. Blyth, though I *am* such a bad boy; it does one good, ma'am, to see you laugh like that, you look so much the better for it. And how's Madonna? I'm afraid she's been sitting before the fire, and trying to spoil her pretty complexion. Why, what's the matter with her? Poor little darling, her hands are quite cold!"

"Come to your lesson, sir, directly," said Valentine, assuming his most despotic voice, and leading the disorderly student, by the collar, to his appointed place.

"Hullo!" cried Zack, looking at the cast which was designed to impress him at first sight with the majesty of ancient sculpture. "Hullo! the gentleman in plaster's making a face: I'm afraid he isn't quite well. I say, Blyth, I don't want to draw his head. It looks as if it had got a crop of snakes on it, instead of a crop of hair."

"Will you hold your tongue and take up your drawing-board?" cried Mr. Blyth. "Crop of snakes, indeed! Why, you young barbarian, you deserve to be expelled from



my academy for talking in that way of the glorious Larkoon. Now then; where's Madonna? Oh, here. No! stop where you are, Zack. I'll show her the place, and give her her drawing-boards. Wait a minute, Lavvie! Let me prop you up comfortably with the pillows before you begin. There! I never saw a more beautiful effect of light and shade, my dear, than there is on your view of the model. Has everybody got a port-crayon and a bit of bread-crumb? Yes, everybody has. Order! order! order!" shouted Valentine, suddenly forgetting his assumed dignity in the exaltation of the moment. "Mr. Blyth's drawing-academy for the promotion of family art is now open, and all ready for general inspection. Hooray!"

"Hooray!" echoed Zack, "hooray for family art! I say, Blyth, which chalk do I begin with?—the white or the black? The black—eh? And, just look here, what part of the what's-his-name's face am I to start with? Ought it to be his eyes, or his nose, or his mouth, or the top of his head, or the bottom of his chin—or what?"

"First sketch in the general form with a light flowing stroke, and without attention to details," said Mr. Blyth, illustrating these directions by waving his hand gracefully about his own face. "Then measure with the eye, assisted, occasionally, by the port-crayon, the proportion of the—in short, of the parts. Then put dots on the paper; a dot where his eyebrow comes; another dot where the tip of his nose comes, and so forth. Then—then, I'll tell you what, strike it all in boldly—it's impossible to give you better advice than that—strike it in, Zack; strike it in boldly!"

"Here goes at the back of his head to begin with," said Zack, taking one comprehensive and confident look at the Larkoon, and drawing a huge half circle, with a preliminary flourish of his hand, on the paper. "Oh, confound it, I've broken the chalk!"

"Of course you have," retorted Valentine. "Take another bit; the academy grants supplementary chalk to ignorant students, who dig their lines on the paper, instead of drawing them. Now, break off a bit of bread-crumb, and rub out what you have done. 'Buy a penny loaf, and rub it all out,' as Mr. Fuseli once said to me in the schools of the Royal academy, when I showed him my first drawing, and was excessively conceited about it."

"I remember," said Mrs. Blyth, "when my father was working at his great plate—which was a dreadfully difficult one—from Mr. Scumble's picture of the 'Fair Gleaner Surprised,' that he used often to say how much harder engraving was than drawing, because you couldn't rub out a false line on copper, like you could on paper. We all

thought he never would get that print done, he used to groan over it so in the front drawing-room, where he was then at work. And the publishers paid him infamously, all in bills which he had to get discounted, and the people who gave him the money cheated him. My mother said it served him right for being always so imprudent which I thought very hard on him, and I took his part—so harassed too as he was by the trades-people at that time."

"I can feel for him, my love," said Valentine, pointing a third piece of chalk for Zack. "The trades-people have harassed me; not because I could pay them certainly, but because I could not add up their bills. Never owe any man enough, Zack, to give him the chance of punishing you for being in his debt, with a sum to do in simple addition. At the time when I had bills (go on with drawing; you can listen, and draw too), I used, of course to think it necessary to check the trades-people, and see that their total was right. You will hardly believe me, but I don't remember ever making the sum what the shop made it, on more than about three occasions. And, what was worse, if I tried a second time, I could not even get it to agree with what I had made it myself the first time. The green-grocer's pence column, I recollect, used to drive me half mad. I was always going to the shops, and insisting that they were wrong; and always turning out to be wrong myself. I dare say I was sometimes cheated; for I used generally to make the sum I had to pay more than the trades-people made it. Thank Heaven, I've no difficulties of that sort to grapple with now! Everything's paid for the moment it comes in. If the butcher hands a leg of mutton to the cook over the airey railings, the cook hands him back four and nine—or, whatever it is—and takes his bill and receipt. I eat my dinners now, with the blessed conviction that they won't all disagree with me in an arithmetical point of view at the end of the year. What are you stopping and scratching your head for in that way?"

"It's no use," replied Zack, "I've tried it a dozen times, and I find I can't draw a nose."

"Can't!" cried Mr. Blyth, "what do you mean by applying the word 'can't' to any process of art in my presence? There, that's the line of the Larkoon's nose. Go over it yourself with this fresh piece of chalk. No; wait a minute. Come here first, and see how Madonna's striking in the nose; the front view of it, remember, which is the most difficult. She hasn't worked as fast as usual, though. Do you find your view of the model a little too much for you, my love?" continued Valentine, transferring the last words to his fingers, to communicate them to Madonna.

She shook her head in answer. It was not the difficulty of drawing from the cast before her, but the difficulty of drawing at all, which was retarding her progress. Her thoughts would wander to the copy of the *Venus de Medici* that was hidden under Mrs. Blyth's coverlid; would vibrate between trembling eagerness to see it presented without longer delay, and groundless apprehension that Zack might, after all, not remember it, or not care to have it when it was given to him. And as her thoughts wandered, so her eyes followed them. Now she stole an anxious inquiring look at Mrs. Blyth, to see if her hand was straying toward the hidden drawing. Now she glanced shyly at Zack—only by moments at a time, and only when he was hardest at work with his port-crayon—to assure herself that he was always in the same good humor, and likely to receive her little present kindly, and with some appearance of being pleased to see what pains she had taken with it. In this way her attention wandered incessantly from her employment; and thus it was that she made so much less progress than usual, and caused Mr. Blyth to suspect that the task he had set her was almost beyond her abilities.

"Splendid beginning, isn't it?" said Zack, looking over her drawing. "I defy the whole royal academy to equal it," continued the young gentleman, scrawling this uncompromising expression of opinion on the blank space at the bottom of Madonna's drawing, and signing his name with a magnificent flourish at the end.

His arm touched her shoulder while he wrote. She colored a little, and glanced at him, playfully affecting to look very proud of his sentence of approval—then hurriedly resumed her drawing as their eyes met. He was sent back to his place by Valentine before he could write anything more. She took some of the bread-crumbs near her to rub out what he had written—hesitated as her hand approached the lines—colored more deeply than before, and went on with her copy, leaving the letters beneath it to remain just as young Thorpe had traced them.

"I shall never be able to draw as well as she does," said Zack, looking at the little he had done with a groan of despair. "The fact is, I don't think drawings my forte. It's color, depend upon it. Only wait till I come to that; and see how I'll lay on the paint! Didn't you find drawing infernally difficult, Blyth, when you first began?"

"I find it difficult still, Master Zack. I find everything difficult; drawing, and color, and light, and shade, and tone, and keeping, and perspective, and proportion," replied Mr. Blyth, with breathless volubility. "Art wouldn't be the glorious thing it is, if it wasn't all difficulty from beginning to end, if it didn't force out all the fine

points in a man's character as soon as he takes to it. It forced out the only two fine points in mine, from the very first. Pluck and Patience surrounding a palette and brushes rampant, have been the motto and coat of arms of V. Blyth, historical painter, ever since the tender age of seventeen. Ah, Lavvie, I had some hard trials before I courted you! I'm afraid to think how many years it took me to get a picture hung up at the academy exhibition. As for selling anything, that was, of course, too mad an idea to be entertained for a single moment. I remember, however, at one time getting so desperate and aggravated at the awful number of my own unsold pictures which surrounded me (and which were all of one size, being economically painted, year after year, to fit the same frame), that I used to leave my painting-room window wide open when I went out for a walk, in the hope that somebody would just step in from the lane outside, and relieve me of my own works, by stealing a few of them. But that last consolation was denied me. The academy did not think my pictures worth hanging; the patrons of art did not think them worth buying; and the thieves joined in the general conspiracy to neglect me, and didn't even think them worth stealing."

While Mr. Blyth was uttering these words, and, indeed, on previous occasions, when he was talking most volubly, he was unblushingly engaged in compromising that character for impartiality which, as master of the new drawing school, it should have been his constant study to maintain, by secretly helping one of his pupils to the prejudice of the other two. Mrs. Blyth's hand was weak, and her practice with the pencil had been sadly neglected of late. Without assistance, her drawing would only have taken a middle place between the drawings of Madonna and Zack. But Valentine had determined that it should win the honors of the evening; and, whenever his wife made a mistake, he was always unscrupulously ready to seize the first opportunity of correcting it for her unobserved. If his sarcastic friends, who were always making jokes about his simplicity, could only have observed his method of proceeding now, when Mrs. Blyth got into a difficulty; if they could only have seen how cunningly he waited to help her until Madonna and Zack were particularly hard at work; how stealthily he took her port-crayon out of her hand; how eloquently he began to talk about art, at the same moment, to avoid a suspicious silence which might induce his younger pupils to look up; how quickly and quietly he executed the necessary alterations, and how dramatically he made comic faces at his wife, indicative of his desire that she should on no account acknow-



ledge publicly the assistance she had received—if Mr Blyth's friends could only have seen all this, what a Machiavelli of conjugal politics he must suddenly have appeared to any critical eyes that observed him by Mrs. Blyth's bedside.

"Just eight o'clock," said Valentine, walking on tiptoe from his wife's drawing to the fireplace, and pretending to be quite absorbed over his watch. "Put down your port-crayons and drawing-boards; I pronounce the sitting of this academy to be suspended till after tea."

"Valentine, dear," said Mr. Blyth, smiling mysteriously, as she slipped her hand under the couch, "I can't get Madonna to look at me, and I want her here. Will you oblige me by bringing her to my bedside?"

"Certainly, my love," returned Mr. Blyth, obeying the request; "you have a double claim on my services to night, for you have shown yourself the most promising of my pupils. I felt convinced, Lavvie, from the first, that you would make the best copy from the Larkoon, and you have quite carried out my conviction," continued Valentine, admiring the drawing which he had just been touching on, with a bland effrontery that completely upset his wife's gravity. "Come here, Zack, and see what Lavvie has done. The best drawing of the evening—just what I thought it would be—the best drawing of the evening!"

Zack, who had been yawning disconsolately over his own copy, with his fists stuck into his cheeks, and his elbows on his knees, bustled up to the couch directly. As he approached, Madonna tried to get back to her former position at the fireplace, but was prevented by Mrs. Blyth, who kept tight hold of her hand. Just then, Zack fixed his eyes on her, and increased her confusion.

"She looks prettier than ever, to-night, don't she, Mrs. Blyth?" said he, sitting down and yawning again. "I always like her best when her eyes brighten up and look twenty different ways in a minute, just as they're doing now. She may not be so like Raphael's pictures at such times, I dare say" (here he yawned once more); "but for my part—what's she wanting to get away for? And what are you laughing about, Mrs. Blyth? I say, Valentine, there is some joke going on here between the ladies!"

"Do you remember this, Zack?" asked Mrs. Blyth, tightening her hold of Madonna with one hand, and producing the framed drawing of the Venus de Medici with the other. "Madonna's copy from my bust of the Venus!" cried Valentine, interposing with his usual readiness, and skipping forward with his accustomed alacrity.

Madonna's copy from Blyth's bust of

the Venus," echoed Zack, coolly; his slippery memory not having preserved the slightest recollection of the drawing at first sight of it.

"Dear me, how nicely it's framed, and how beautifully she has finished it," pursued Valentine, gently patting Madonna's shoulder, in token of his high approval and admiration.

"Very nicely framed, and beautifully finished, as you say, Blyth," glibly repeated Zack, rising from his chair, and looking rather perplexed as he noticed the expression with which Mrs. Blyth was regarding him.

"But who got it framed?" asked Valentine. "She would never have any of her drawings framed before. I don't understand what it all means."

"No more do I," said Zack, dropping back into his chair in lazy astonishment. "Is it some riddle, Mrs. Blyth? Something about why is Madonna like the Venus de Medici, eh? If it is, I object to the riddle, because she's a deal prettier than any plaster face that ever was made. Your face beats Venus's hollow," continued Zack, communicating this bluntly sincere compliment to Madonna by the signs of the deaf and dumb alphabet.

She smiled as she watched the motion of his fingers—perhaps at his mistakes, for he made two in expressing one short sentence of five words; perhaps at the compliment, homely as it was.

"Oh, you men, how dreadfully stupid you are sometimes!" exclaimed Mrs. Blyth. "Why, Valentine, dear, it's the easiest thing in the world to guess what she has had the drawing framed for. To make it a present to somebody, of course! And, who does she mean to give it to?"

"Ah! who indeed?" interrupted Zack, sliding down cozily in his chair, resting his head on the back rail, and spreading his legs out before him at full stretch.

"I have a great mind to throw the drawing at your head, instead of giving it to you!" cried Mrs. Blyth, losing all patience.

"You don't mean to say the drawing's a present to me!" exclaimed Zack, starting from his chair with one huge jump of astonishment.

"You deserve to have your ears well boxed, for not having guessed that it was, long ago!" retorted Mrs. Blyth. "Have you forgotten how you praised that very drawing, when you saw it begun in the studio? Didn't you tell Madonna—"

"Oh, the dear, good, generous, jolly little soul!" cried Zack, snatching up the drawing from the couch, as the truth burst upon him at last in a flash of conviction. "Tell her on your fingers, Mrs. Blyth, how proud I am of my present: I can't do it with mine, because I can't let go of the drawing

Here, look here"—make her look here, and see how I like it!" And Zack hugged the copy of the *Venus de Medici* to his waistcoat by way of showing how highly he prized it.

At this outburst of sentimental pantomime, Madonna raised her head, and glanced at young Thorpe. Her face, downcast, anxious, and averted even from Mrs. Blyth's eyes, during the last few minutes (as if she had guessed every word that could pain her, out of all that had been said in her presence), now brightened again with pleasure as she looked up—with innocent, childish pleasure, that affected no reserve, dreaded no misconception, foreboded no disappointment. Her eyes, turning quickly from Zack, and appealing gayly to Valentine, beamed with triumph when he pointed to the drawing, and smilingly raised his hands in astonishment, as a sign that he had been pleasantly surprised by the presentation of her drawing to his new pupil. Mrs. Blyth felt the hand which she still held in hers, and which had hitherto trembled a little from time to time, grow steady and warm in her grasp, and dropped it. There was no fear that Madonna would now leave the side of the couch and steal away by herself to the fireplace.

"Go on, Mrs. Blyth; you never make mistakes in talking on your fingers, as I always do; go on, please, and tell her how much I thank her," continued Zack, holding out the drawing at arm's length, and looking at it with his head on one side, by way of imitating Valentine's manner of studying his own pictures. "Tell her I'll take such care of it as I never took of anything before in my life. Tell her I'll hang it up in my bedroom, where I can see it every morning as soon as I wake. Have you told her that? or, stop! shall I write it on her slate? But do just tell her first; not that it's much use, for she understands what I mean (the clever, kind, little darling!) if I only look at her; but just tell her first—halloo! here comes the tea. Oh, by George, what a glorious lot of muffins! Here, Patty, give us the toasting-fork: I'm going to begin. I never saw such a splendid fire for toasting muffins before in my life! Run-dum-diddy-iddy-dum-dee, dum-diddy-iddy-dum!" And Zack fell on his knees at the fireplace, humming "Rule Britannia," and toasting his first muffin in triumph, utterly forgetting, in the new excitement of the moment, that he had left Madonna's drawing lying neglected, with its face downward, on the end of Mrs. Blyth's couch.

Valentine, who, in the innocence of his heart, suspected nothing, burst out laughing at this new specimen of Zack's inveterate flightiness. His kind instincts, however, guided his hand at the same moment

to the drawing. He took it up carefully, and placed it on a low bookcase at the opposite side of the room. If any increase had been possible in his wife's affection for him, she would have loved him better than ever at the moment when he performed that one little action.

As her husband removed the drawing, Mrs. Blyth looked at Madonna. The poor girl stood shrinking close to the couch, with her hands clasped tightly together in front of her, and with no trace of their natural lovely color left on her cheeks. Her eyes followed Valentine listlessly to the bookcase, then turned toward Zack, not reproachfully nor angrily, not even tearfully; but again with that same look of patient sadness, of gentle resignation to sorrow, which used to mark their expression so tenderly in the days of her bondage among the mountebanks of the travelling circus. So she stood, looking toward the fireplace and the figure kneeling at it, bearing her new disappointment just as she had borne many a former mortification that had tried her sorely while she was yet a little child. How carefully she had labored at that neglected drawing in the secrecy of her own room! how happy she had been in anticipating the moment when it would be given to young Thorpe; in imagining what he would say on receiving it, and how he would communicate his thanks to her; in wondering what he would do with it when he got home; where he would hang it, and whether he would often look at his present after he had got used to seeing it on the wall! Thoughts such as these had made the moment of presenting that drawing the moment of a great event in her life—and there it was now, placed on one side by other hands than the hands into which it had been given; laid down carelessly at the mere entrance of a servant with a tray; neglected for the childish pleasure of kneeling on the hearth-rug, and toasting a muffin at a clear coal-fire!

Mrs. Blyth's generous, impulsive nature, and sensitively-tempered affection for her adopted child, impelled her to take instant and not very merciful notice of Zack's unpardonable thoughtlessness. Her face flushed, her dark eyes sparkled, as she turned quickly on her couch toward the fireplace. But, before she could utter a word, Madonna's hand was on her lips, and Madonna's eyes were fixed with a terrified, imploring expression on her face. The next instant, the girl's trembling fingers rapidly signed these words:—

"Pray, pray don't say anything! I would not have you speak to him just now for the world!"

Mrs. Blyth hesitated, and looked toward her husband; but he was away at the other end of the room, amusing himself profes-



sionally by casting the drapery of the window-curtains hither and thither into all sorts of picturesque folds. She looked next at Zack. Just at that moment he was turning his muffin and singing louder than ever. The temptation to startle him out of his provoking gaiety by a good, sharp reproof was almost too strong to be resisted; but Mrs. Blyth forced herself to resist it, nevertheless, for Madonna's sake. She did not, however, communicate with the girl, either by signs or writing, until she had settled herself again in her former position; then her fingers expressed these sentences of reply:—

"If you promise not to let his thoughtlessness distress you, my love, I promise not to speak to him about it. Do you agree to that bargain? If you do, give me a kiss."

Madonna only paused to repress a sigh that was just stealing from her, before she gave the required pledge. Her cheeks did not recover their color, nor her lips the smile that had been playing on them earlier in the evening; but she arranged Mrs. Blyth's pillow even more carefully than usual, before she left the couch, and went away to perform as neatly and prettily as ever her own little household duty of making the tea.

Zack, entirely unconscious of having given pain to one lady, and cause of anger to another, had got on to his second muffin, and had changed his accompanying song from "Rule Britannia" to the "Lass o' Gowrie;" Mrs. Blyth was considering how she could make him see the necessity of atoning for his carelessness later in the evening, without departing from the promise she had just given; Madonna, with a hand less steady than usual, and with her attention nervously concentrated entirely on the tray before her, was pouring out the tea; Valentine, having left the window-curtains and seated himself at the table, was wondering why she was so pale, and waiting anxiously until she looked up to ask if the room was too hot for her: when the hollow, ringing sound of rapidly-running wheels, penetrated into the room from the frosty road outside; advancing nearer and nearer, and then suddenly ceasing, as it seemed, exactly opposite Mr. Blyth's own door.

"Dear me! surely that's at our gate," exclaimed Valentine; "who can be coming to see us so late on such a cold night as this? And in a carriage, too!"

"It's a cab by the rattling of the wheels, and it brings us the 'Lass o' Gowrie,'" sang Zack, ingeniously combining the original text of his song, and the suggestion of a possible visiter, in his concluding words.

"Do leave off singing nonsense out of tune, and let us listen when the door

opens," said Mrs. Blyth, glad to seize the slightest opportunity of administering the smallest reproof to Zack.

"Suppose it should be Mr. Gimble come to deal at last for that picture of mine that he has talked of buying so long," exclaimed Valentine.

"Suppose it should be my governor!" cried Zack, suddenly turning round on his knees with a very blank face. "Or that infernal old Yollop, with his gooseberry eyes and his hands full of tracts. They're both of them quite equal to coming after me and spoiling my pleasure here, just as they've spoilt it everywhere else."

"Hush!" said Mrs. Blyth. "The visiter has come in, whoever it is. It can't be Mr. Gimble, Valentine; he always runs up two stairs at a time."

"And this is one of the heavy-weights. Not an ounce less than sixteen stone, I should say by the step," remarked Zack, letting his muffin burn while he listened.

"It can't be that tiresome old Lady Brambledown come to worry you again about altering her picture," said Mrs. Blyth.

"Stop! surely it isn't—" began Valentine. But before he could say another word the door opened; and, to the utter amazement of everybody but the poor girl whose ear no voice could reach, the servant announced

"Mrs. PECKOVER."

## CHAPTER XIII.

### AN OLD FRIEND.

TIME had lavishly added to Mrs. Peckover's size, but had generously taken little or nothing from her in exchange. Her hair had certainly turned gray since the period when Valentine first met her at the circus; but the good-humored face beneath was just as lively and hearty to look at now as ever it had been in former days. Her cheeks had ruddily expanded; her chin had passed from the double to the triple stage of jovial development; any faint traces of a waist which she might formerly have possessed were utterly obliterated, but it was pleasantly evident, to judge only from the manner of her bustling entry into Mrs. Blyth's room, that her active disposition had lost nothing of its early energy, and could still gayly defy all corporeal obstructions to the very last.

Puffing out abundant fragments of cordial words; nodding and smiling at Mr. and Mrs. Blyth, and Zack, till her vast country-bonnet trembled aguishly on her head, the good woman advanced, shaking every moveable object in the room, straight to the tea-

table, and enfolded Madonna in her capacious arms. The girl's light figure seemed to disappear in a smothering circumambient mass of bonnet-ribands and unintelligible drapery, as Mrs. Peckover saluted her with a rattling fire of kisses, the report of which was audible above the voluble talking of Mr. Blyth and the boisterous laughter of Zack.

"I'll tell you all about how I came here directly, sir; only I couldn't help saying how-d'ye-do in the old way to little Mary to begin with," said Mrs. Peckover apologetically. It had been found impossible to prevail on her to change the familiar name of "little Mary," which she had pronounced so often and so fondly in past years, for the name which had superseded it in Valentine's house. The truth was, that this worthy creature knew nothing whatever about Raphael; and, considering "Madonna" to be an outlandish foreign word intimately connected with Guy Fawkes and the Gunpowder Plot, firmly believed that no respectable Englishwoman of mature age ought to compromise her character by attempting to pronounce it.

"I'll tell you, sir—I'll tell you directly why I have come to London," repeated Mrs. Peckover, backing majestically from the tea-table, and rolling round easily on her own axis in the direction of the couch, to ask for the fullest particulars of the state of Mrs. Blyth's health.

"Much better, my good friend—much better," was the cheerful answer; "but now do tell us (we are so glad to see you!) how you came to surprise us all in this way?"

"Well, ma'am," began Mrs. Peckover, "it's a'most as great a surprise to me to be in London, as it is—to be quiet, Young Good-for-Nothing; I won't even shake hands with you if you don't behave yourself!" The last words she addressed to Zack, whose favorite joke it had always been, from the day of their first acquaintance at Valentine's house, to pretend to be violently in love with her. He was now standing with his arms wide open, the toasting-fork in one hand and the muffin he had burnt in the other, trying to look languishing, and entreating Mrs. Peckover to give him a kiss.

"When you know how to toast a muffin properly, perhaps I may give you one," said she, chuckling as triumphantly over her own small retort as if she had been a professed wit. "Do, Mr. Blyth, sir, please to keep him quiet, or I shan't be able to get on with a single word of what I've got to say. Well, you see, ma'am, Doctor Joyce—"

"How is he?" interrupted Valentine, naming Mrs. Peckover a cup of tea.

"He's the best gentleman in the world, sir, but he will have his glass of port after

dinner; and the end of it is, he's laid up again with the gout."

"And Mrs. Joyce?"

"Laid up too, sir—it's a dreadful sick house at the rectory—laid up with the infirmer."

"Have any of the children caught the influenza too?" asked Mrs. Blyth. "I hope not."

"No, ma'am, they're all nicely, except the youngest; and it's on account of her—don't you remember her, sir, growing so fast, when you was last at the rectory?—that I'm up in London."

"Is the child ill?" asked Valentine anxiously. "She's such a picturesque little creature, Lavvie! I long to paint her."

"I'm afraid, sir, she's not fit to be put into a picture now," said Mrs. Peckover. "Mrs. Joyce is in sad trouble about her because of one of her shoulders which has growed out somehow. The doctor at Rubbleford don't doubt but what it may be got right again; but he said she ought to be shown to some great London doctor as soon as possible. So, neither her papa nor her mamma being able to take her up to her aunt's house, they trusted her to me. As you know, sir, ever since Doctor Joyce got my husband that situation at Rubbleford, I've been about the rectory, helping with the children and the housekeeping and all that; and Miss Lucy being used to me, we come along together in the railroad quite pleasant and comfortable. I was glad enough, you may be sure, of the chance of getting here, after not having seen little Mary for so long. So I just left Miss Lucy at her aunt's, where they were very kind, and wanted me to stop all night. But I told them that, thanks to your goodness, I always had a bed here when I was in London; and I took the cab on, after seeing the little girl safe and comfortable up-stairs. That's the whole story about how I come to surprise you in this way, ma'am—and now I'll finish my tea."

Having got to the bottom of her cup, and to the end of a muffin amorously presented to her by the incorrigible Zack, as a token of his unalterable affection, Mrs. Peckover had leisure to turn again to Madonna; who, having relieved her of her bonnet and shawl, was now sitting close at her side. "I didn't think she was looking quite so well as usual, when I first come in," said Mrs. Peckover, patting the girl's cheek with her chubby fingers: "but she seems to have brightened up again now." (This was true: the sad stillness had left Madonna's face at sight of the friend and mother of her early days.) "Perhaps she's been sticking a little too close to her drawing lately—"

"By-the-by, talking of drawings, what's



become of *my* drawing?" cried Zack, suddenly recalled for the first time to the remembrance of Madonna's gift.

"Dear me!" pursued Mrs. Peckover, looking toward the three drawing-boards, which had been placed together round the pedestal of the cast; "are all those little Mary's doings? She's cleverer at it I suppose, by this time, than ever. Ah, Lord! what an old woman I feel, when I think of the many years ago—"

"Come and look at what she has done to-night," interrupted Valentine, taking Mrs. Peckover by the arm, and pressing it very significantly as he glanced at the part of the table where young Thorpe was sitting.

"My drawing—where's my drawing?" repeated Zack. "Who put it away when tea came in? Oh! there it is, all safe on 'the bookcase.'"

"I congratulate you, sir, on having succeeded at last in remembering that there is such a thing in the world as Madonna's present," said Mrs. Blyth sarcastically.

Zack looked up bewildered from his tea, and asked directly what those words meant.

"Oh, never mind," said Mrs. Blyth in the same tone, "they're not worth explaining. Did you ever hear of a young gentleman who thought more of a plate of muffins than of a lady's gift? I dare say not! I never did. It's too ridiculously improbable to be true, isn't it? There! don't speak to me; I've got a book here that I want to finish. No, it's no use; I shan't say another word."

"What have I done that's wrong?" asked Zack, looking piteously perplexed as he began to suspect that he had committed some unpardonable mistake earlier in the evening. "I know I burnt a muffin; but what has that got to do with Madonna's present to me?" (Mrs. Blyth shook her head; and, opening her book, became quite absorbed over it in a moment.) "Didn't I thank her properly for it? I'm sure I meant to. I should be a beast and a fool if I wasn't grateful and proud at what she's done for me." (Here he stopped; but Mrs. Blyth took no notice of him.) "I suppose I've got myself into some scrape? Make as much fun as you like about it; but tell me what it is. You won't? Then I'll find out all about it from Madonna. She knows, of course; and she'll tell me. Look here, Mrs. Blyth; I'm not going to get up till she's told me everything." And Zack, with a comic gesture of entreaty, dropped on his knees by Madonna's chair; preventing her from leaving it, which she tried to do, by taking immediate possession of the slate that hung at her side.

While young Thorpe was scribbling questions, protestations, and extravagances of every kind, in rapid succession, on the slate; and while Madonna—her face half-

smiling, half-tearful, as she felt that he was looking up at it—was reading what he wrote, trying hard, at first, not to believe in him too easily when he scribbled an explanation, and not to look down on him too leniently when he followed it up by an entreaty; and ending at last, in defiance of Mrs. Blyth's private signs to the contrary in forgiving his carelessness, and letting him take her hand again as usual, in token that she was sincere—while this little scene of the home drama was proceeding at one end of the room, a scene of another kind—a dialogue in mysterious whispers—was in full progress between Mr. Blyth and his visitor from the country, at the other.

Time had in no respect lessened Valentine's morbid anxiety about the strict concealment of every circumstance attending Mrs. Peckover's first connection with Madonna, and Madonna's mother. The years that had now passed and left him in undisputed possession of his adopted child, had not diminished that excess of caution in keeping secret all the little that was known of her early history, which had even impelled him to pledge Doctor and Mrs. Joyce never to mention in public any particulars of the narrative related at the rectory. Still he had not got over his first dread that she might one day be traced, claimed, and taken away from him, if that narrative, meagre as it was, should ever be trusted to other ears than those which had originally listened to it. Still he kept the hair bracelet and the handkerchief that had belonged to her mother carefully locked up out of sight in his bureau; and still he doubted Mrs. Peckover's discretion in the government of her tongue, as he had doubted it in the bygone days when the little girl was first established in his own home.

After making a pretence of showing her the drawings begun that evening, Mr. Blyth artfully contrived to lead Mrs. Peckover past them into a recess at the extreme end of the room.

"Well," he said, speaking in an unnecessarily soft whisper, considering the distance which now separated him from Zack; and which would have prevented any words he might say in a low tone from being overheard, even by a person who was expressly listening to catch them. "Well, I suppose you're quite sure of not having let out anything by chance, since we last met—in the way of gossip with neighbors, you know—about how you first met with our darling girl? or about her poor mother? or—"

"What, you're at it again, sir?" interrupted Mrs. Peckover loftily, but dropping her voice in imitation of Mr. Blyth—"a clever man, too, like you! Dear, dear me! how often must I keep on telling you that I'm old enough to be able to hold my tongue? How much longer are you going

to worry yourself about hiding what nobody's seeking after?"

"My good soul, you know I always believe you can hold your tongue," returned Valentine, coaxingly; "but, only just now, you were going to talk before young Thorpe there, about old times, and what you remember of our dear child years ago, if I hadn't interrupted you."

"I wasn't going to talk of nothing of the kind, sir; and I'm surprised you could suspect me of it," answered Mrs. Peckover quickly and positively.

"It was my mistake then, and I beg your pardon." He stopped here, to look at Zack; then, seeing that young Thorpe was too much occupied with Madonna to pay attention to anything else, added: "And your husband? and Doctor, and Mrs. Joyce? none of them ever say a word about it before other people, of course?"

"Haden't you better write and ask them, sir?" retorted Mrs. Peckover, sarcastically. "It would be much more satisfactory than depending on a gossiping old woman like me, that can't keep a secret."

"Hush! hush!" said Valentine, taking her hand. "You're not going to be offended with me, I know! We always have our little tiff about this when we meet, don't we? But we never take offence—oh, no, never! We are too old friends for that."

Mrs. Peckover smiled perfect acquiescence in this sentiment, and moved to return to the other end of the room. Mr. Blyth, however, detained her for a few moments; and seriously, almost sadly, continued:—

"Whenever I see you, my good friend, I fancy I hear all that melancholy story over again about our darling child, and that poor lost forsaken mother of hers, whose name even we don't know. I feel, too, when you come and see us, almost more than at other times, how inexpressibly precious the daughter whom you have given to us is to Lavvie and me; and I think with more dread than I well know how to describe, of the horrible chance, if anything was incautiously said, and carried from mouth to mouth (as it certainly would be) about where you met with her mother, for instance, or what time of the year it was, and so forth—that it might lead, nobody knows now, to some claim being laid to her, by somebody who might be able to prove the right to make it."

"Lord, sir! after all these years, what earthly need have you to be anxious about such things as that?"

"I'm never anxious long, Mrs. Peckover. My good spirits always get the better of every anxiety, great and small. But, while I don't know that relations of hers—perhaps her vile father himself—may not be still alive, and seeking for her."

"Bless your heart, Mr. Blyth, none of her relations are alive: or, if they are, none of them care about her, poor lamb, I'll answer for it."

"I hope in God you are right," said Valentine, earnestly. "But let us think no more about it now," he added, resuming his usual manner. "I have asked my regular questions, that I can't help asking whenever I see you; and you have forgiven me, as usual, for putting them; and now I am quite satisfied. Take my arm, Mrs. Peckover: I mean to give the students of my new drawing academy a holiday for the rest of the night, in honor of your arrival. What do you say to devoting the evening in the old way to a game of cards?"

"Just what I was thinking I should like myself, as long as it's only sixpence a game, sir," said Mrs. Peckover gayly. "I say, young gentleman," she continued, addressing Zack after Mr. Blyth had left her to look for the cards, "what nonsense are you writing on our darling's slate that puts her all in a flutter, and makes her blush up to the eyes, when she's only looking at her poor old Peck? Bless her heart! she's just as easily amused now as when she was a child. Give us another kiss, my own little love. You understand what I mean, don't you, though you can't hear me? Ah, dear, dear! when she stands and looks at me with her eyes like that, she's the living image of—"

"Cribbage," cried Mr. Blyth, knocking a triangular board for three players on the table, and regarding Mrs. Peckover with the most reproachful and rebuking expression that his features could assume.

She felt that the look had been deserved, and approached the card-table rather confusedly, without uttering another word. But for Valentine's second interruption she would have declared before young Thorpe that Madonna was the living image of her mother.

Fortunately, Zack came to her relief during the awkward moment of silence that now ensued. He had gone away to the bookcase while she was speaking, to get his present and show it to her, and was now carrying on his favorite joke while she looked at the drawing—entreating her not to be jealous of Madonna, trying to put his arm round her waist, declaring that "Mrs. Peckover" was the name of the only girl he had ever truly loved, and assailing her with so much boisterous nonsense of the same sort that she recovered her good spirits, and the use of her tongue in self-defence immediately.

"Madonna's going to play, as usual. Will you make a third, Lavvie?" inquired Valentine, shuffling the cards. "It's no use asking Zack; he can't even count yet."

"No, thank you, dear. I shall have quite enough to do in going on with my



book, and trying to keep Master Madcap in order while you play," replied Mrs. Blyth.

The game began, it was a regular custom, whenever Mrs. Peckover came to Mr. Blyth's house, that cribbage should be played, and that Madonna should take a share in it. This was done, on her part, principally in affectionate remembrance of the old times when she lived under the care of the clown's wife, and when she had learnt cribbage from Mr. Peckover to amuse her, while the frightful accident which had befallen her in the circus was still a recent event. It was characteristic of the happy peculiarity of her disposition that the days of suffering and affliction, and the after-period of hard tasks in public, with which cards were connected in her case, never seemed to recur to her remembrance painfully when she saw them in later life. The pleasanter associations which belonged to them, and which reminded her of homely kindness that had soothed her in pain, and self-denying affection that had consoled her in sorrow, were the associations instinctively dwelt on by her heart to the exclusion of all others. Valentine's utmost watchfulness never detected a sad look on her face when Mrs. Peckover was in town, and when they were playing the same game at cards that had been first taught her after the calamity which had shattered one of her senses, and fatally suspended the exercise of another.

To Mrs. Blyth's great astonishment, Zack, for full ten minutes, required no keeping in order whatever while the rest were playing at cards. It was the most incredible of human phenomena, but there he certainly was, standing quietly by the fireplace with his present in his hand, actually thinking! Mrs. Blyth's amazement at this unexampled change in his manner so completely overcame her, that she fairly laid down her book to look at him. He noticed the action, and approached the couch directly.

"That's right," said he; "don't read any more. I want to have a regular good serious consultation with you."

First a visit from Mrs. Peckover, then a serious consultation with Zack. This is a night of wonders!—thought Mrs. Blyth.

"I've made it all right with Madonna," Zack continued. "She don't think a bit the worse of me because I went on like a fool about the muffins at teatime. But that's not what I want to talk about now: it's a sort of secret. In the first place—"

"Do you usually mention your secrets in a voice that everybody can hear?" asked Mrs. Blyth, laughing.

"Oh, never mind about that," he replied, not lowering his tone in the least; "it's only a secret from Madonna, and we can talk before *her*, poor little soul, just as if she wasn't in the room. Now this is the thing: she's made me a present, and think I ought

to show my gratitude by making her another in return." (He resumed his ordinary manner as he warmed with the subject, and began to walk up and down the room in his usual flighty, fidgety way.) "Well, I have been thinking what the present ought to be—something pretty, of course. I can't do her a drawing yet worth a rap, and even if I could—"

"Suppose you come here and sit down, Zack," interposed Mrs. Blyth. "While you are wandering backward and forward in that way before the card-table, you take Madonna's attention off the game."

No doubt he did. How could she see him walking about close by her, and carrying her drawing with him wherever he went, as if he prized it too much to be willing to put it down—without feeling gratified in more than one of the innocent little vanities of her sex, without looking after him much too often to be properly alive to the interests of her game?

Zack took Mrs. Blyth's recommendation, and sat down by her, with his back toward the cribbage-players.

"Well, the question is, what present am I to give her?" he went on. "I've been twisting and turning it over in my mind, and the long and the short of it is—"

("Fifteen two, fifteen four, and a pair's six," said Valentine, reckoning up the tricks he had in his hand at that moment.)

"Did you ever notice that she has a particularly pretty hand and arm?" proceeded Zack somewhat evasively. "I'm rather a judge of these things myself; and of all the other girls I ever saw—"

"Never mind about other girls," said Mrs. Blyth. "Tell me what you mean to give Madonna."

("Two for his heels," cried Mrs. Peckover, turning up a knave with great glee.)

"I mean to give her a bracelet," said Zack.

Valentine looked up quickly from the card-table.

("Play, please, sir," said Mrs. Peckover; "little Mary's waiting for you.")

"Well, Zack," rejoined Mrs. Blyth, "your idea of returning a present only errs on the side of generosity. I should recommend something less costly. Don't you know that it's one of Madonna's oddities not to care about jewelry? She might have bought herself a bracelet long ago, out of her own savings, if trinkets had been things to tempt her."

"Wait a bit, Mrs. Blyth," said Zack, with an air of considerable self-approbation; "you haven't heard the best of my notion yet; all the pith and marrow of it has got to come. The bracelet I mean to give her is one that she will prize to the day of her death, or she's not the affectionate, warm-hearted girl I take her for. What do you

think of a bracelet that reminds her of you and Valentine, and jolly old Peck there—and a little of me, too, which I hope won't make her think the worse of it. I've got a design against all your heads," he continued, imitating the cutting action of a pair of scissors with two of his fingers, and raising his voice in high triumph. "It's a splendid idea: I mean to give Madonna a hair bracelet!"

Mrs. Peckover and Mr. Blyth started back in their chairs, and stared at each other as amazedly as if Zack's last words had sprung from a charged battery, and had struck them both at the same moment with a smart electrical shock. On any ordinary occasion, the recollections suggested by what young Thorpe had just said, would not have been of a nature to impress them lightly, or to be soon forgotten when once aroused; but on this particular evening, coming after such a conversation as they had held together not half an hour ago, the mere mention of a hair bracelet in connection with Madonna had something vaguely ominous in it to both their minds. With one accord they looked from each other to the girl, who was sitting between them, astonished at seeing the game suddenly suspended for no cause that she could possibly discern.

"Of all the things in the world, how came he ever to think of giving her that!" ejaculated Mrs. Peckover under her breath; her memory reverting, while she spoke, to the mournful day when strangers had searched the body of Madonna's mother, and had found the hair bracelet hidden away in a corner of the dead woman's pocket.

"Hush! let's go on with the game," said Valentine. He, too, was thinking of the hair bracelet—thinking of it as it now lay locked up in his bureau down-stairs, remembering how he would fain have destroyed it years ago, but that his conscience and sense of honor forbade him; pondering on the fatal discoveries to which, by bare possibility, it might yet lead, if ever it should fall into strangers' hands.

"A hair bracelet," continued Zack, quite unconscious of the effect he was producing on two of the card-players behind him; "and *such* hair, too, as I mean it to be made of?—Why, Madonna will think it more precious than all the diamonds in the world. I defy anybody to have hit on a better idea of the sort of present she's sure to like; it's elegant and appropriate, and all that sort of thing—isn't it?"

"Oh, yes! very nice and pretty indeed," replied Mrs. Blyth, rather absently and confusedly. She knew as much of Madonna's history as her husband did; and was wondering what he would think of the present which young Thorpe proposed giving to their adopted child.

"The thing I want most to know," said Zack, "is what you think would be the best pattern for the bracelet. There will be two kinds of hair in it which can be made into any shape, of course—your hair and Mrs. Peckover's."

"(Not a bit of my hair shall go toward the bracelet—not a single bit!)" muttered Mrs. Peckover, who was listening to what was said while she went on playing.)

"The difficult hair to bring in will be mine and Valentine's," pursued Zack. "Mine's long enough to be sure; I ought to have got it cut a month ago; but it's so stiff and curly; and Blyth keeps his cropped so short—I don't see what they can do with it (do you?), unless they make rings, or stars, or knobs, or something stumpy in the way of a cross-pattern of it."

"The people at the shop will know best," said Mrs. Blyth, resolving to proceed cautiously.

"One thing I'm determined on, though, beforehand," cried Zack—"the clasp. The clasp shall be a serpent—"

"Which her villain of a father was, I'll answer for it," whispered Mrs. Peckover to herself, behind the cards; her mind still running on Madonna and Madonna's mother.)

"—a serpent," continued Zack, "with turquoise eyes, and a carbuncle tail, and all our initials scored up somehow on his scales. Won't that be splendid? I should like to surprise Madonna with it this very evening."

"(You shall never give it to her if I can help it)," grumbled Mrs. Peckover, still soliloquizing under her breath. "If anything in the world can bring her ill-luck, it will be a hair bracelet!")

These last words were spoken with perfect seriousness; for they were the result of the strongest superstitious conviction.

Beyond the bare knowledge of reading and writing, Mrs. Peckover was entirely uneducated. She had lived for the most part of her life—the early part of it especially—among persons as uninstructed as herself. There was not a popular superstition of the many still preserved among her class which she did not know and believe in—not a superstitious view that could be taken of any remarkable circumstance, which she was not prepared to embrace at a moment's notice. From the time when the hair bracelet was found on Madonna's mother, she had persuaded herself—not unnaturally, in the absence of any information to the contrary—that it had been in some way connected with the ruin and shame which had driven its unhappy possessor forth as an outcast to die among strangers. To believe, in consequence, that a hair bracelet had brought "ill-luck" to the mother, and to derive from that belief the resulting conviction that a hair bracelet would therefore



also bring "ill-luck" to the child, was a perfectly direct and inevitable deductive process to Mrs. Peckover's superstitious mind. The motives which had formerly influenced her to forbid her "little Mary" ever to begin anything important on a Friday, or ever to imperil her prosperity by walking under a ladder, were precisely the motives by which she was now actuated in determining to prevent the presentation of young Thorpe's ill-omened gift by every means in her power, short of disclosing the secret that she was bound to preserve.

Although Valentine had only caught a word here and there, to guide him to the subject of Mrs. Peckover's mutterings to herself while the game was going on, he guessed easily enough the general tenor of her thoughts, and suspected that she would ere long begin to talk louder than was at all desirable, if Zack proceeded much further with his present topic of conversation. Accordingly, he took advantage of a pause in the game, and of a relapse into another restless fit of walking about the room on young Thorpe's part, to approach his wife's couch as if he wanted to find something lying near it, and to whisper to her, "Stop his talking any more about that present to Madonna; I'll tell you why another time."

Mrs. Blyth very readily and easily complied with this injunction, by telling Zack (with perfect truth) that she had been already a little too much excited, considering her weak state, by the events of the evening; and that she must put off all further listening or talking on her part till the next night, when she promised to advise him about the bracelet to the best of her power. He was, however, still too full of his subject to relinquish it easily under no stronger influence than the influence of a polite hint. Having lost one listener in Mrs. Blyth, he boldly tried the experiment, to that lady's great dismay, of inviting two others to replace her, by addressing himself to the players at the card-table.

"I dare say you have heard what I have been talking about to Mrs. Blyth?" he began.

"I ord, Master Zack!" said Mrs. Peckover, "do you think we haven't had something else to do here, besides listening to you? There now! don't talk to us, please, till we are done, or you'll throw us out altogether. Don't, sir, on any account, because we are playing for money—sixpence a game."

Repelled on both sides, Zack was obliged to give way. He walked off to try and amuse himself at the bookcase. Mrs. Peckover, with a very triumphant air, nodded and winked several times at Valentine across the table; desiring, by these signs, to direct his attention to the fact that she

could not only be silent herself when the conversation was in danger of approaching a forbidden subject, but could make other people hold their tongues too.

The room was now perfectly quiet, and the game at cribbage proceeded smoothly enough, but not so pleasantly as usual on other occasions. Valentine did not regain his customary good spirits; and Mrs. Peckover relapsed into whispering discontentedly again to herself—now and then looking toward the bookcase, where young Thorpe was sitting sleepily, with a volume of engravings on his knee. It was, more or less, a relief to everybody when the supper-tray came up, and the cards were put away for the night.

Zack becoming quite lively again at the prospect of a little eating and drinking, tried to return to the dangerous subject of the hair bracelet; addressing himself, on this occasion, directly to Valentine. He was interrupted, however, before he had spoken three words. Mr. Blyth suddenly remembered that he had an important communication of his own to make to young Thorpe.

"Excuse me, Zack," he said, "I have a bit of news to tell you, which Mrs. Peckover's arrival drove out of my head; and which I must mention to you at once, while I have the opportunity. Both my pictures are done—what do you think of that?—done, and in their frames. I settled the titles yesterday. The classical landscape it to be called 'The Golden Age,' which is a pretty poetical sort of name; and the figure-subject is to be 'Columbus in Sight of the New World,' which is, I think, simple, affecting, and grand. Wait a minute! the best of it has yet to come. I am going to show both the pictures in the studio to my friends, and my friends' friends, as early as Saturday next."

"You don't mean it!" exclaimed Zack. "Why it's only January now; and you always used to have your private view a home of your own pictures in April, just before they were sent into the academy exhibition."

"Quite right," interposed Valentine, "but I am going to make a change this year. The fact is, I have got a job to do in the provinces, which will take me away at the beginning of the spring; it is not a job worth mentioning; but it will prevent me from having my picture-show at the usual time. So I mean to have it now. The pictures are done and framed, and fit to be seen; and the cards of invitation are coming home from the printer's to-morrow morning. I shall reserve a packet, of course, for you when we see you to-morrow night."

"Thank you, old fellow: I'll bring lots of friends. And now, I say, just to go back

to what I was talking about a minute ago—"

But Valentine was not to be caught. He had some important additions to make to the invitation-list, which accidentally occurred to him just at that moment, and sent him away, with many apologies, to his wife's bedside, to "ask Lavvie for the memorandum-book."

Still obstinate and indefatigable, Zack tried Mrs. Peckover next; but was immediately repelled with such extraordinary abruptness and asperity that he gave up in despair all hopes of further expounding his favorite idea of the hair bracelet for that night; and sought amusement elsewhere, by practising the deaf and dumb alphabet with Madonna.

He was still thus occupied, when the clock on Mrs. Blyth's mantelpiece struck the half hour after ten. Having his own private reasons for continuing to preserve the appearance of perfect obedience to his father's domestic regulations, he rose at once to say good-night, in order to insure being home before the house-door was bolted at eleven o'clock. This time he did not forget Madonna's drawing; but, on the contrary, showed such unusual carefulness in tying his pocket-handkerchief over the frame to preserve it from injury as he carried it through the streets, that she could not help—in the fearless innocence of her heart—unreservedly betraying to him, both by look and manner, when he took his leave, how warmly she appreciated his anxiety for the safe preservation of her gift. Never had the bright, kind, young face been lovelier in its artless happiness than it appeared at the moment when she was shaking hands with Zack.

Just as Valentine was about to follow his guest out of the room, Mrs. Blyth called him back, reminding him that he had a cold, and begging him not to expose himself to the wintry night-air by going down to the door.

"But the servants must be in bed by this time (they never wait up unless they're told); and somebody ought to fasten the bolts," remonstrated Mr. Blyth. "Never mind about my cold, Lavvie; I shan't hurt if I put on my hat."

"I'll go, sir," said Mrs. Peckover, rising with extraordinary alacrity. "I'll see Master Zack out, and do up the door. Bless your heart! it's no trouble to me. I'm always moving about at home from morning to night, to prevent myself from getting fatter. Don't say no, ma'am: I shan't feel at home unless you let me make myself useful. And don't you stir, Mr. Blyth, unless you are afraid of trusting an old gossip like me alone with any of your visitors."

The last words were intended as a sarcasm, and were whispered into Valentine's

ear. He understood the allusion to their private conversation together easily enough; and felt that, unless he let her have her own way without further contest, he must risk offending an old friend by implying a mistrust of her which would be simply ridiculous, under the circumstances in which they were placed. So, when his wife nodded to him to take advantage of the offer just made, he accepted it forthwith.

"Now I'll stop his giving her a hair bracelet!" thought Mrs. Peckover, as she bustled out after young Thorpe, and closed the room-door behind her.

"Wait a bit, young gentleman," said she, arresting his further progress on the first landing. "Just leave off talking a minute, and let me speak. I've got something to say to you. Do you really mean to give her that hair bracelet?"

"Oho! then you did hear something at the card-table about it, after all?" said Zack. "Mean? Of course I mean!"

"And you want to put some of my hair in it?"

"To be sure I do! Madonna wouldn't like it without."

"Then you had better make up your mind at once to give her some other present; for not one bit of my hair shall you have. There now! what do you think of that?"

"I don't believe it, my old darling."

"It's true though, I can tell you. Not hair of my head shall you have."

"Why not?"

"Never mind why. I've got my own reasons."

"Very well: if you come to that, I've got my reasons for giving the bracelet; and I mean to give it. If you won't let any of your hair be plaited up along with the rest, it's Madonna you will disappoint—not me."

Mrs. Peckover began to feel that she must change her tactics, or be defeated.

"Don't you be so dreadful obstinate, Master Zack, and I'll tell you the reason," she said, in an altered tone, leading the way lower down into the passage. "I don't want you to give her a hair bracelet at all, because I believe it will bring ill-luck to her—there!"

Zack burst out laughing. "Do you call that a reason? Who ever heard before of a hair bracelet being an unlucky gift? On, you mysterious old Peck! what are you driving at?"

At this moment, the door of Mrs. Blyth's room opened.

"Anything wrong with the lock?" asked Valentine from above. He was rather surprised at the time that elapsed without his hearing the house-door shut.

"All quite right, sir," said Mrs. Peckover; adding in a whisper to Zack—"Hush! don't say a word!"



"Don't let him keep you in the cold with his nonsense," said Valentine.

"My nonsense!" began Zack, indignantly.

"He's going, sir," interrupted Mrs. Peckover. "I shall be up-stairs in a moment."

"Come in, dear, pray! You're letting all the cold air into the room," exclaimed the voice of Mrs. Blyth.

The door of the room closed again.

"What the devil *are* you up to?" asked Zack, in extreme bewilderment.

"I only want you to give her some other present," said Mrs. Peckover, in her most wheedling tones. "You may think it all a whim of mine, if you like—I dare say I'm an old fool; but I don't want you to give her a hair bracelet. There's lots of other presents you can choose from instead. I'd do as much for you, Master Zack, if you asked me: I would, indeed!"

"Well, I'll be hanged if I don't think one of us two has been making free with the sherry-and-water at supper—and it isn't *me*!" (Mrs. Peckover's cheeks reddened with rising indignation.) "Reasons first, and whims afterward, eh? *Whims*! Oh, heavens! to think of a largely-developed woman at your time of life having whims!" (The cheeks grew redder still.) "But it won't do: I shall give her the hair bracelet—ah, yes, you may look as cross as you like, but I shall! My mind's made up about it; nothing in the world can stop me—except, of course, her having a hair bracelet already, which I know she hasn't."

"Oh! you know that, do you, you mischievous imp? Then, for once in a way, you just know wrong!" exclaimed Mrs. Peckover, losing her temper altogether.

"You don't mean to say so? Dear me! now very remarkable, to think of her having a hair bracelet already, and of my not knowing it! Mrs. Peckover," continued Zack, mimicking the tone and manner of his old clerical enemy, the Reverend Aaron Yollop, "what I am now about to say, grieves me deeply; but I have a solemn duty to discharge, and in the conscientious performance of that duty I now unhesitatingly express my conviction that the remark you have just made is—a flam."

"It isn't, monkey!" returned Mrs. Peckover, her anger fairly boiling over, as she nodded her head vehemently in Zack's face.

Just then, Valentine's step became audible in the room above: first moving toward the door, then suddenly retreating from it, as if he had been called back.

"I haven't let out what I oughtn't, have I?" thought Mrs. Peckover, calming down directly, when she heard the movement upstairs.

"Oh, you stick to it, do you?" continued Zack. "It's rather odd, old lady, that Mrs. Blyth shouldn't have told me about this

newly-discovered hair bracelet of yours, in the course of the evening. But she doesn't know, of course; and Valentine doesn't know either, I suppose? By Jove! he's not gone to bed yet; I'll run back, and ask him if Madonna really has got a hair bracelet!"

"For God's sake, don't—don't say a word about it!" exclaimed Mrs. Peckover, turning pale as she thought of possible consequences, and catching young Thorpe by the arm when he tried to pass her in the passage.

"Halloo!" cried Zack, startled into seriousness by the sudden change in her face, "What's the matter now?"

"Don't! there's a dear, good fellow!" she continued, in an eager whisper; "don't say a word about it, or you will get me into dreadful trouble, and make mischief with everybody, and set Mr. Blyth thinking all sorts of things, that I wouldn't have him think for the whole world. Don't speak! I know you can't understand it—how should you? Oh, Lord! I wish I hadn't come down-stairs and spoke to you at all! No, no! don't say a word. Of course, you can't make out what it all means, can you? But that don't matter, does it? It isn't your business, is it? You haven't got no need to inquire, have you, now? And you won't say a word, or think about it, or remember it, will you? Hush! hush! he's coming down after us!"

The step up-stairs passed across the room again.

"Well, upon my soul, of all the queer old women!"

"Hush! he's going to open the door this time; he is, indeed!"

"Never mind; I won't say anything," whispered Zack, his natural good-nature prompting him to relieve Mrs. Peckover's distress, the moment he became convinced that it was genuine. "And, as for my notion of the hair bracelet—though I haven't the slightest idea what you have been driving at all this time—I won't do anything in it, till—"

"That's a good chap! that's a dear good chap!" exclaimed Mrs. Peckover, squeezing Zack's hand in a fervor of unbounded gratitude.

The door of Mrs. Blyth's room opened for the second time.

"Isn't he gone yet?" inquired Valentine, in a tone which sounded awfully sharp and suspicious to Mrs. Peckover's guilty ears. He would have asked the question some minutes earlier, but his attention had been engaged by a discussion with his wife about the advice she should give young Thorpe, when he came to go on with his drawing lesson the next evening, in relation to the present he proposed making to Madonna. They might, however, have saved them

selves the trouble of engaging in any consultation on this subject. Zack's course of study in the new drawing academy was destined, at the very outset, to meet with a check.

"He's gone, sir; he's gone at last!" said Mrs. Peckover, shutting the house-door on the parting guest with inhospitable rapidity, and locking it with elaborate care and extraordinary noise.

"I must manage to make it all safe with Master Zack to-morrow night; though I don't believe I have said a single word I oughtn't to say," thought she, slowly ascending the stairs. "But Mr. Blyth makes such fusses, and works himself into such fidgets about the poor thing being traced and taken away from him (which is all stuff and nonsense), that he would be sure to think I'd let out everything, and go half-distracted if he knew what I said just now to Master Zack. Not that it's so much what I said to him, as what he made out somehow and said to me. But they're so sharp, these young London chaps—they are so awful sharp!"

Here, she stopped on the landing, to recover her breath; then whispered to herself, as she went on and approached Mr. Blyth's door:—

"But one thing I'm determined on; little Mary sha'n't have that hair bracelet!"

\* \* \* \* \*

Even as Mrs. Peckover walked thinking all the way up-stairs, so did Zack walk wondering all the way home.

What the deuce could this extraordinary botheration about his present to Madonna possibly mean? Was it not at least clear from the fright old Peck was in, when he talked of asking Blyth whether Madonna really had a hair bracelet, that she had told the truth after all, and not a flam? And was it not even clearer still that she had let out a secret in telling that truth, which Blyth must have ordered her to keep? Why keep it? What was there in Madonna's having a hair bracelet to make a mystery about? Who was Madonna? How was it Blyth would never tell anybody even so much as where he picked her up? Was this mysterious hair bracelet, which he never remembered seeing her wear—and which Mrs. Blyth had said nothing about, while he was actually talking of his hair bracelet that he had intended to buy—mixed up somehow with the grand secret about Madonna's origin that Valentine had always kept from everybody? Was not this, upon the whole, very possible? But what did it matter, after all, whether it was or not? What need to bother his head about what didn't concern him? Was it not, considering all things—and especially remembering the fact, previously forgotten, that he had but fifteen shillings and threepence of dis-

posable money in the world—rather lucky than otherwise that old Peck had taken it into her head to stop him from buying what he hadn't the means of paying for? Would she find some excuse to get him off making his expensive present after what he had said to Mrs. Blyth? What could he buy for Madonna that was pretty, and cheap enough to suit the present state of his pocket? Would she like a thimble? or an almanac? or a pair of cuffs? or a pot of bear's grease?

Here Zack suddenly paused in his mental interrogatories; for he had arrived within sight of his home in Baregrove square.

A change passed over his handsome face—he frowned, and his color deepened, as he looked up at the light in his father's window.

"I'll stop out again to-night, and see life," he muttered doggedly to himself, approaching the door. "The more I'm bullied at home, the oftener I'll go out on the sly."

This rebellious speech was occasioned by the recollection of a domestic scene, which had contributed, early that evening, to swell the list of the tribulations of Zack; and which had been produced by his father's disapproval of his accepting an invitation to Valentine's house. Mr. Thorpe (as has been hinted in a former place) had moral objections to Mr. Blyth's profession, and moral doubts on the subject of Mr. Blyth himself. These doubts had been strengthened, though not originated, by the damaging reports occasioned by that gentleman's own refusal to explain away the mystery which enveloped the birth and parentage of his adopted child. Mr. Thorpe knew his duty to his neighbor, and was too anxious never to judge any man hastily and wrongly, to allow himself to be sensibly biased by mere report in forming his judgment of Mr. Blyth; but scandal had its wily influence over him as over others; and strengthened, more importantly than he himself suspected, his suspicion that the painter was a person with no fixed principles, and no discernible standard of respectability. As a necessary consequence of this suspicion, he considered Mr. Blyth to be no fit companion for a devout young man; and expressed, severely enough, his unmeasured surprise at finding that his son could exhibit already such "backsliding forgetfulness" of the excellent lessons instilled into him by the Reverend Aaron Yollop, as to wish to accept an invitation to tea from a person of doubtful character. Zack's rejoinder to his father's reproof was decisive, if it was nothing else. He denied everything alleged or suggested against his friend's reputation—lost his temper on being sharply rebuked for the "indecent vehemence" of his language—and left the paternal tea-table in defiance,



to go and eat muffins in the doubtful company of Mr. Valentine Blyth.

"Just in time, sir," said the page, grinning at his young master as he opened the door. "It's on the stroke of eleven."

Zack muttered something savage in reply, which it is not perhaps advisable to report. The servant secured the lock and bolts, while he put his hat on the hall-table, and lit his bedroom-candle.

Rather more than an hour after this time—or, in other words, a little past midnight—the door opened again softly, and Zack appeared on the step equipped for his nocturnal expedition.

He hesitated, as he put the key into the lock from outside, before he closed the door behind him. He had never done this on other occasions; he could not tell why he did it now. We are mysteries even to ourselves; and there are times when the voices of the future that are in us, yet not ours, speak, and make the earthly part of us conscious of their presence. Oftenest our mortal sense feels that they are breaking their dread silence at those supreme moments of existence, when on the choice between two apparently trifling alternatives hangs suspended the whole future of a life. And thus it was now with the young man who stood on the threshold of his home, doubtful whether he should pursue or abandon the purpose which was then uppermost in his mind. On his choice between the two alternatives of going on, or going back—which the closing of a door would decide—depended the future of his life, and of other lives that were mingled with it.

He waited a minute undecided, for the warning voices within him were stronger than his own will: he waited, looking up thoughtfully at the starry loveliness of the winter's night—then closed the door behind him as softly as usual—hesitated again at the last step that led on to the pavement—and then fairly set forth from home, walking at a rapid pace through the streets.

He was not in his usual good spirits. He felt no inclination to sing as was his wont, while passing through the fresh, frosty air: and he wondered why it was so.

The voices were still speaking faintly and more faintly within him. But we must die before we can become immortal as they are; and their language to us in this life is often as an unknown tongue.

## BOOK II.

### THE SEEKING.

#### CHAPTER I.

##### A FIGHT IN THE TEMPLE OF HARMONY.

THE Roman poet who, writing of vice, ascribed its influence entirely to the allurements of the fair disguises that it wore, and asserted it to be a monster so hideous by nature that it only needed to be seen to excite the hatred of all mankind, uttered a very plausible moral sentiment, which wants nothing to recommend it to the unqualified admiration of posterity but a slight seasoning of practical truth. Even in the most luxurious days of old Rome, it may very safely be questioned whether vice could ever afford to disguise itself to win recruits, except from the wealthier classes of the population. But in these modern times, it may be decidedly asserted as a fact, that vice, in accomplishing the vast majority of its seductions, uses no disguise at all; appears impudently in its naked deformity; and, instead of horrifying all beholders, in accordance with the prediction of the classical satirist, absolutely attracts a much more numerous congregation of worshippers than has ever yet been brought together by the divinest beauties that virtue can display for the allurements of mankind.

That famous place of public amusement, known to the loose-living and late-roaming youth of London by the name of the Temple of Harmony, affords, among hosts of other instances which might be cited, a notable example to refute the assertion of the ancient poet by establishing the fact that vice is in no danger of being loathed, even when it presents itself to the beholder uncovered by the bare rags and tatters of the flimsiest disguise.

The Temple of Harmony, as its name denotes, was principally devoted to the exhibition of musical talent, and opened at a period of the night when the performances at the theatres were over. The standing orchestral arrangements of the place were all comprised in one bad piano; to which were occasionally added, by way of increasing the attractions, performances on the banjo and guitar. The singers were called "ladies and gentlemen." The temple itself consisted of one long room, with a double row of benches, bearing troughs at their backs for the reception of glasses of liquor. It has a slightly-raised stage at the end for the performers; and its drab-colored walls pretended to be panelled, but made so bad a pretence of it as to merit no notice, and even to get none.

Innocence itself must have seen at a glance that the Temple of Harmony was an utterly vicious place. Vice never so much as thought of wearing any disguise here. No glimmer of wit played over the foul substance of the songs that were sung, and hid it in dazzle from too close observation. No relic of youth and freshness, no artfully-assumed innocence and vivacity, concealed the squalid, physical deterioration of the worn-out human counterfeits which stood up to sing, and were coarsely painted and padded to look like fine women. Their fellow-performers among the men were such sodden-faced blackguards as no shop-boy who applauded them at night would dare to walk out with in the morning. The place itself had as little of the allurements of elegance and beauty about it, as the people. Here was no bright gilding on the ceiling—no charm of ornament, no comfort of construction even, in the furniture. Here were no viciously-attractive pictures on the walls—no enervating sweet odors in the atmosphere—no contrivances of ventilation to cleanse away the stench of bad tobacco-smoke and brandy-flavored human breath with which the room reeked all night long. Here, in short, was vice wholly undisguised; recklessly showing itself to every eye, without the varnish of beauty, without the tinsel of wit, without even so much as the flavor of cleanliness to recommend it. Were all beholders instinctively overcome by horror at the sight? Far from it. The Temple of Harmony was crammed to its last benches every night; and the proprietor filled his pockets from the purses of applauding audiences. For, let classical moralists say what they may, vice gathers followers as easily, in modern times, with the mask off, as ever it gathered them in ancient times with the mask on.

It was two o'clock in the morning; and the entertainments in the temple were fast rising to the climax of harmonic joviality. A favorite comic song had just been sung by a bloated old man with a bald head and a hairy chin. There was a brief lull of repose, before the amusements resumed their noisy progress. Orders for grog and cigars were flying abroad in all directions. Friends were talking at the tops of their voices, and strangers were staring at each other—except at the lower end of the room, where the whole attention of the company was concentrated strangely upon one man.

The person who thus attracted to himself the wondering curiosity of all his neighbors, had come in late; had taken the first vacant place he could find near the door; and had sat there listening and looking about him very quietly. He drank and smoked like the rest of the company; but never applauded, never laughed, never exhibited the slightest symptom of astonish-

ment, or pleasure, or impatience, or disgust; though it was evident, from his manner of entering and giving his orders to the waiters, that he visited the Temple of Harmony on that night for the first time.

He was not in mourning, for there was no band round his head; but he was dressed nevertheless in a black frockcoat, waistcoat, and trousers, and wore black kid gloves. He seemed to be very little at his ease in this costume, moving his limbs, whenever he changed his position, as cautiously and constrainedly as if he had been clothed in gossamer instead of stout black broadcloth, shining with its first new gloss on it. Judging of him in a sitting posture, he did not appear to be a tall man; but his shoulders were prodigiously broad, and his arms so long as to look out of all proportion to his body. His face was tanned to a perfectly Moorish brown, was scarred in two places by the marks of old wounds, and was overgrown by coarse, iron-gray whiskers, which met under his chin. His eyes were light, and rather large, and seemed to be always quietly, but vigilantly on the watch. Indeed, the whole expression of his face, coarse and heavy as it was in form, was remarkably for its acuteness, for its cool collected penetration, for its habitually observant, passively-watchful look. Any one guessing at his calling from his manner and appearance, would have sat him down immediately as the captain of a merchantman; and would have been willing to lay any wager that he had been several times round the world.

But it was not his face, or his dress, or his manner, that drew on him the attention of all his neighbors: it was his head. Under his hat (which was brand new, like everything else he wore), there appeared, fitting tight round his temples and behind his ears, a black-velvet skull-cap. Not a vestige of hair peeped from under it. All round his head, as far as could be seen beneath his hat, which he wore far back over his coat-collar, there was nothing but bare flesh, encircled by a rim of black velvet.

From a great proposal for reform, to a small eccentricity in costume, the English are the most intolerant people in the world, in their reception of anything which presents itself to them under the form of a perfect novelty. Let any man display a new project before the Parliament of England, or a new pair of light-green trousers before the inhabitants of London, let the project proclaim itself as useful to all listening ears, and the trousers eloquently assert themselves as beautiful to all beholding eyes, the nation will shrink suspiciously, nevertheless, both from the one and the other; will order the first to "lie on the table," and will hoot, laugh, and stare at the second; will, in short, resent either novelty as an unwar-



rantable intrusion, for no other discernible reason than that people in general are not used to it.

Quietly as the strange man in black had taken his seat in the Temple of Harmony, he and his skull-cap attracted general attention; and our national weakness displayed itself immediately.

Nobody paused to reflect that he probably wore his black-velvet head-dress from necessity; nobody gave him credit for having objections to a wig, which might be perfectly sensible and well founded; and nobody, even in this free country, was liberal enough to consider that he had really as much right to put on a skull-cap under his hat if he chose, as any other man present had to put on a shirt under his waistcoat. The audience saw nothing but the novelty in the way of a head-dress which the stranger wore, and they resented it unanimously because it was a novelty. First, they expressed this resentment by staring indignantly at him, then by laughing at him, then by making sarcastic remarks on him. He bore their ridicule with the most perfect and provoking coolness. He did not expostulate, or retort, or look angry, or grow red in the face, or fidget in his seat, or get up to go away. He just sat smoking and drinking as quietly as ever, not taking the slightest notice of any of the dozens of people who were all taking notice of him.

His imperturbability only served to encourage his neighbors to take further liberties with him. One fragile little gentleman, with a spirituous nose and watery eyes, urged on by some women near him, advanced to the stranger's bench, and expressing his admiration of a skull-cap as a becoming ornamental addition to a hat, announced with a bow of mock politeness, his ardent desire to feel the quality of the velvet. He stretched out his hand as he spoke, not a word of warning or expostulation being uttered by the victim of the intended insult; but the moment his fingers touched the skull-cap, the strange man, still without speaking, without even removing his cigar from his mouth, very deliberately threw all that remained of the glass of hot brandy and water before him in the fragile gentleman's face.

With a scream of pain as the hot liquor flew into his eyes, the miserable little man struck out helplessly with both his fists, and fell down between the benches. A friend, who was with him, advanced to avenge his injuries, and was thrown sprawling on the floor. Yells of "Turn him out!" and "Police!" followed; people at the other end of the room jumped up excitedly on their seats; the women screamed, the men shouted and swore, glasses were broken, sticks were waved, benches were cracked, and, in one instant, the stranger was as-

sailed by every one of his neighbors who could get near him, on pretence of turning him out.

Just as it seemed a matter of certainty that he must yield to numbers, in spite of his gallant resistance, and be ignominiously hurled out of the door down the flight of stairs that led to it, a tall, young gentleman, with a quantity of light, curly hair on his hatless head, leaped up on one of the benches at the opposite side of the gangway running down the middle of the room, and apostrophized the company around him with vehement fistic gesticulation. Alas for the respectabilities of parents with pleasure-loving sons! alas for Mr. Valentine Blyth's idea of teaching his pupil to be steady, by teaching him to draw! This furious young gentleman was no other than Mr. Zachary Thorpe, junior, of Baregrove square.

"D—n you all, you cowardly counter-jumping scoundrels!" roared Zack, his eyes aflame with valor, generosity, and gin-and-water. "What do you mean by setting on one man in that way? Hit out, sir—hit out right and left! I saw you insulted, and I'm coming to help you!"

With these words Zack tucked up his cuffs, and jumped into the crowd about him. His height, strength, and science as a boxer, carried him triumphantly to the opposite bench. Two or three blows on the ribs, and one on the nose which drew blood plentifully, only served to stimulate his ardor and increase the pugilistic ferocity of his expression. In a minute he was by the side of the man with the skull-cap; and the two were fighting, back to back, amid roars of applause from the audience at the upper end of the room who were only spectators of the disturbance.

In the meantime the police had been summoned. But the waiters down-stairs, in their anxiety to see a struggle between two men on one side and somewhere about two dozen on the other, had neglected to close the street-door. The consequence was, that all the cabmen on the stand outside, and all the vagabond night-idlers in the vagabond neighborhood of the Temple of Harmony, poured into the narrow passage, and got up an impromptu riot of their own with the waiters who tried, too late, to turn them out. Just as the police were forcing their way through the throng below, Zack and the stranger had fought their way out of the throng above, and had got clear of the room.

On the right of the landing as they approached it, was a door, through which the man with the skull-cap now darted, dragging Zack after him. His temper was just as cool, his quick eye just as vigilant as ever. The key of the door was inside. He locked it, amid a roar of applauding laughter from the people on the staircase, mixed

with cries of "Police," and "Stop 'em in the court!" from the waiters. The two then descended a steep flight of stairs at headlong speed, and found themselves in a kitchen, confronting an astonished man-cook and two female servants. Zack knocked the man down before he could use the rolling-pin which he had snatched up on their appearance; while the stranger coolly took a hat that stood on the dresser, and jammed it tight with one smack of his large hand on young Thorpe's bare head. The next moment they were out in a court into which the kitchen opened, and were running at the top of their speed.

The police, on their side, lost no time; but they had to get out of the crowd in the passage and go round the front of the house, before they could arrive at the turning which led into the court from the street. This gave the fugitives a start; and the neighborhood of alleys, lanes, and by-streets in which their flight immediately involved them, was the neighborhood of all others to favor their escape. While the springing of rattles and the cries of "Stop thief!" were rending the frosty night-air in one direction, Zack and the stranger were walking away quietly, arm in arm, in the other—young Thorpe adjuring any stray policeman who ran past them to be quick for heaven's sake, and stop a dreadful row that was going on outside the Temple of Harmony.

The man with the skull-cap had taken the lead hitherto, and he took it still; though, from the manner in which he stared about him at corners of streets, and involved himself and his companion every now and then in blind alleys, it was clear enough that he was quite unfamiliar with the part of the town through which they were now walking. Zack, having treated himself that night to his fatal third glass of grog, and having finished half of it before the fight began, was by this time in no condition to care about following any particular path in the great labyrinth of London. He walked on, talking thickly and incessantly to the stranger, who never once answered him. It was of no use to applaud his bravery; to criticise his style of fighting, which was anything but scientific; to express astonishment at his skill in knocking his hat on again, all through the struggle, every time it was knocked off; and to declare admiration of his quickness in taking the cook's hat to cover his companion's bare head, which might have exposed him to suspicion and capture as he passed through the streets. It was of no use to speak on these subjects, or on any others. The imperturbable hero who had not uttered a word all through the fight, was as imperturbable as ever, and would not utter a word after it.

They strayed at last into Fleet street, and walked to the foot of Ludgate hill. Here the stranger stopped—glanced toward the open space on the right, where the river ran—gave a great rough gasp of relief and satisfaction—and made directly for Blackfriars bridge. He led Zack, who was still slightly thick in his utterance, and unsteady on his legs, to the parapet wall; let go of his arm there; and, looking steadily in his face by the light of the gas-lamp, addressed him, for the first time, in a remarkably grave, deliberate voice, and in these words:—

"Now, then, young 'un, suppose you pull a breath, and wipe that bloody nose of yours."

Zack, instead of resenting this unceremonious manner of speaking to him—which he might have done had he been sober—burst into a frantic fit of laughter. The remarkable gravity and composure of the stranger's tone and manner, contrasted with the oddity of the proposition by which he opened the conversation, would have been irresistibly ludicrous even to a man whose faculties were not at all in an intoxicated condition.

While Zack was roaring with laughter till the tears rolled down his cheeks, his odd companion was leaning over the parapet of the bridge, and pulling off his black kid gloves, which had suffered considerably during the progress of the fight. Having rolled them up into a ball, he jerked them contemptuously into the river.

"There goes the first pair of gloves as ever I had on; and the last as ever I mean to wear," said he, spreading out his brawny hands to the sharp night breeze.

Young Thorpe heaved a few last expiring gasps of laughter; then became quiet and serious from sheer exhaustion.

"Go it again," said the man of the skull-cap, staring at him as gravely as ever, "I like to hear you."

"I can't go it again," answered Zack, faintly; "I'm out of breath. Oh, you queer old beggar! who the devil are you?"

"I ain't nobody in particular; and I don't know as I've got a single friend to care about who I am in all England," replied the other. "Give us your hand, young 'un! In the foreign parts where I come from, when one man stands by another as you've stood by me to-night, them two are brothers together afterward. You needn't be a brother to me, if you don't like. I mean to be a brother to you, whether you like it or not. My name's Mat. What's yours?"

"Zack," returned young Thorpe, clapping his new acquaintance on the back with brotherly familiarity already. "You're a jolly old boy; and I like your way of talking. Where do you come from, Mat? And what do you wear that queer cap under your hat for?"



"I come from America last," replied Mat, as grave and deliberate as ever; "and I wear this cap because I haven't got no scalp on my head."

"D—n it! what do you mean?" cried Zack, startled into temporary sobriety, and taking his hand off his new friend's shoulder as quickly as if he had put it on a red-hot iron.

"I always mean what I say," continued Mat; "I've got that much good about me, if I haven't got no more. Me and my scalp parted company years ago. I'm here, on a bridge in London, talking to a young chap of the name of Zack. My scalp's on the top of a high pole in some Indian village, anywhere you like about the Amazon country. If there's any puffs of wind going there, like there is here, it's rattling just now, like a bit of dry parchment; and all the hair on it is flipping about like a horse's tail when the flies is in season. I don't know nothing more about my scalp than that. If you don't believe me, just lay hold of my hat, and I'll show you—"

"Oh, hang it, no!" exclaimed Zack, recoiling from the offered hat. "I believe you, old fellow. But how the deuce do you manage without a scalp—I never heard of such a thing before in my life—how is it you're not dead, eh?"

"It takes a deal more to kill a tough man than you London chaps think," said Mat. "I was found before my head got cool, and plastered over with leaves and ointment. They'd left a bit of scalp at the back, being in rather too great a hurry to do their work as handily as usual; and a new skin grewed over, after a little, a babyish sort of skin that wasn't half thick enough, and wouldn't bear no new crop of hair. So I had to eke out and keep my head comfortable with an old yellow handkercher; which I always wore till I got to San Francisco, on my way back here. I met with a priest at San Francisco, who told me I should look a little less like a savage, if I wore a skull-cap like his, instead of a handkercher, when I got back into what he called the civilized world. So I took his advice, and bought his cap. I suppose it looks better than my old yellow handkercher; but it ain't half so comfortable."

"But how did you lose your scalp?" asked Zack—"tell us all about it. Upon my soul, Mat, you seem to be the most interesting fellow I ever met with! And, I say, let's walk about, while we talk. I feel steadier on my legs now; and it's so infernally cold standing here."

"Which way can we soonest get out of this muck of houses and streets?" asked Mat, surveying the London view around him with an expression of grim disgust. "There ain't no room, even on this bridge,

for the wind to blow fairly over a man. I'd just as soon be smothered up in a bed, as smothered up in smoke and stink here."

"What a queer fellow you are!—a regular character. Come along, this way. Steady, old boy! The grog's not quite out of my head yet; and I've got the hiccups. Here's my way home, and your way into the fresh air, if you really want it. Come along, and tell me how you lost your scalp."

"There ain't nothing particular to tell. What's your name again?"

"Zack."

"Well, Zack, I was out on the tramp, dodging about after any game that turned up, on the banks of the Amazon—"

"Amazon? What the devil's that? A woman? or a place? Steady! or that cab will be over us."

"Did you ever hear of South America?"

"I can't positively swear to it; but to the best of my belief, I think I have."

"Well; Amazon's a longish bit of a river in those parts. I was out, as I told you, on the tramp—"

"By Jove! you look like the sort of man who has been out on the tramp every where."

"Do I?"

"And done everything, I should say."

"Most everything. I've druv' cattle in Mexico; I've been out with a gang that went to find an overland road to the North Pole; I've worked through a season or two in catching wild horses in the Pampas; and another season or two in digging gold in California. I went away from England, a tidy lad aboard ship; and here I am back again now, an old vagabond as hasn't a friend to own him. If you want to know exactly who I am, and what I've been up to all my life, that's about as much as I can tell you."

"And deucedly interesting it is, too! But I say—oh, these infernal hiccups! I'm always bothered with them at night after eating supper. I've been a martyr to hiccups ever since I was a child—but, I say, there's one thing you haven't told me yet; you haven't told me what your other name is besides Mat. Mine's Thorpe."

"I haven't heard the sound of the other name you're asking after, for a matter of better than twenty year; and I don't care if I never hear it again." His voice sank huskily, and he turned his head a little away from Zack, as he said those words. "They nicknamed me 'Marksman,' when I used to go out with the exploring gangs, because I was the best shot of all of them. You call me Marksman, too, if you don't like Mat. Mister Matthew Marksman, if you please: everybody seems to be a 'Mister' here. You're one, of course. But I don't mean to call you 'Mister' for all that. I shall stick to Zack; it's short, and there's no bother about it."

"All right, old fellow! And I'll stick to Mat, which is shorter still by a whole letter. But, I say, you haven't told the story yet about how you lost your scalp."

"There ain't no story in it. Do you know what it is to have a man dodging after you through these odds and ends of streets here? I dare say you do. Well, I had three skulking thieves of Indians dodging after me, over better than four hundred miles of lonesome country, where I might have bawled for help for a whole week on end, and never made anybody hear me. They wanted my scalp, and they wanted my rifle, and they got both at last, at the end of their man-hunt, because I couldn't get any sleep."

"Not get any sleep! Why not?"

"Because they was three, and I was only one, to be sure! One of them kep' watch while the other two slept. I hadn't nobody to keep watch for me; and my life depended on my eyes being open night and day. I took a dog's snooze once, and was woke out of it by an arrow in my face. I kep' on a long time after that, before I give out; but at last I got the horrors, and thought the prairie was all a-fire, and run from it. I don't know how long I run on in that mad state; I only know that the horrors turned out to be the saving of my life. I missed my own trail, and struck into another, which was a trail of friendly Indians—people I'd traded with, you know. And I come up with them somehow, near enough for the stragglers of their hunting-party to hear me shriek when my scalp was took. And now you know as much about it as I do; for I can't tell you no more, except that I woke up like, in an Indian wigwam with a crop of cool leaves on my head, instead of a crop of hair."

"By George, how horrible! (It's tremendously exciting though.) Which of those scars on your face is the arrow-wound, eh? Oh, that's it—is it? Hullo! old boy, you've got a black eye. Did any of those fellows hit hard enough to hurt you in that row of ours?"

"Hurt me! Chaps like them *hurt me!*!" and Mr. Marksman, tickled by the extravagance of the idea which Zack's question suggested to him, shook his sturdy shoulders, and indulged himself in a gruff chuckle which seemed to claim some sort of barbarous relationship with a laugh.

"Ah! of course they haven't hurt you; I didn't think they had," said Zack, whose pugilistic sympathies were deeply touched by the contempt with which his new friend treated the bumps and bruises received in the fight. "Go on, Mat, I like adventures of your sort. What did you do after your head healed up?"

"Well, I got tired of dodging about the Amazon, and went south, and learnt to

throw a lasso, and took a turn at the wild horses. Galloping did my head good."

"It's just what would do mine good too. Yours is the sort of jolly, wandering life, Mat, for me! How did you first come to lead it? Did you run away from home?"

"No. I served aboard ship, where I was put out, being too idle a vagabond to be kep' at home. I always wanted to run wild somewhere for a change; but I didn't really go to do it, till I picked up a letter which was waiting for me in port, at the Brazils. There was news in that which sickened me of going home again; so I deserted, and went off on the tramp. And I've been mostly on the tramp ever since, till I got here last Sunday."

"What! have you only been in England since Sunday?"

"That's all. I made a good time of it in California, where I've been last, digging gold. My mate, as was with me, got a talking about the old country, and wrought on me so that I went back with him to see it again. So, instead of gambling away all my money over there" (Mr. Marksman carelessly jerked his hand in a westerly direction), "I've come to spend it over here. I'm going down into the country to-morrow, to see if anybody cares to own me at the old place. If nobody does, I shall go back again at once. After twenty years among the savages, or little better, I ain't fit for the sort of thing as goes on among you here. I can't sleep in a bed; I can't stop in a room; I can't be comfortable in decent clothes; I can't stray into a singing-shop, as I did to-night, without a dust being kicked up all round me, because I haven't got a proper head of hair like everybody else. I can't shake up along with the rest of you, nohow; I'm used to hard lines and a wild country; and I shall go back and die over there among the lonesome places where there's plenty of room for me." And again Mr. Marksman jerked his hand carelessly in the direction of the American continent.

"Oh, don't talk about going back, old fellow!" cried Zack; "you must have such lots of good stories to tell, and I want to hear them all. There's nothing I should like better than bolting to America myself. It's no use going back the moment you've got here, before I've had time to know you. Besides, you're sure to find somebody left at home—don't you think so yourself, Mat?"

Mat made no answer. He suddenly slackened; then, as suddenly, increased his pace; dragging young Thorpe with him at a headlong rate.

"You're sure to find somebody," continued Zack, in his off-hand, familiar way. "I don't know—gently, Mat! we're not walking for a wager—I don't know whether



you're married or not?" (Mr. Marksman still made no answer, and walked quicker than ever). "But if you haven't got wife or child, every fellow's got a father and mother, you know; and most fellows have got brothers or sisters; and even if—"

"Good night," said Mr. Marksman, stopping short, and abruptly holding out his hand.

"Why what's the matter now?" asked Zack, in astonishment. "What do you want to part company for already? We are not near the end of the streets yet. I haven't said anything that's offended you?"

"No, nothing. You can go on talking to me, if you like, the day after to-morrow. I shall be back then, whatever happens. I said I'd be like a brother to you; and that means, in my lingo, doing anything you ask. You want me to tell you about the sort of life I've been leading—do you? Very well; I'll tell you as much as you want. There's a backer shop in Kirk street, Wendover market, with a green door, and fourteen written on it in yaller paint. When I am shut up in a room of my own, which isn't often, I'm shut up there. I can't give you the key of the house, because I want it myself."

"Kirk street? That's my way. Why can't we go on together? What do you want to say good-night here for?"

"Because I want to be left by myself. It ain't your fault; but you've set me thinking of something that don't make me easy in my mind. I've led a lonesome life of it, young 'un; straying away months and months out in the wilderness, without a human being to speak to. I dare say that wasn't a right sort of life for a man to take up with; but I *did* take up with it; and I can't get over liking it sometimes still. When I'm not easy in my mind, I want to be left lonesome as I used to be. I want it now." And once more, Mr. Marksman held out his hand.

"Well, Mat, you certainly are the most curious fellow I ever met with. Wait a bit, old boy, till I've written down your direction in my pocket-book. Hang the thing! I can't get at it. What number was it—eh? Oh! Fourteen. Wait a minute. 'Mr. Marksman (that's the name to ask for, isn't it?)' All right. 'Mr Marksman, 14, Kirk street, Wendover market.' What's the day after to-morrow? Thursday? 'Wendover market: Thursday.' Morning, early, shall I write? Very well: 'Morning, early.' And, Mat, if you really don't find anybody that belongs to you—"

"Good-night," repeated Mr. Marksman, crossing suddenly to the other side of the road, and then walking straight on at a great pace.

Young Thorpe stood with his pocket-book

and pencil in his hand, looking after his new friend until he had lost sight of him in the dark distance dotted with gaslights; and had heard the last thump of his steady footstep die away on the pavement in the morning stiffness of the street.

"That's a queer fellow," thought Zack, as he pursued his own road, "and we have got acquainted with each other in a very queer way. I shall go and see him though, on Thursday; for, if ever I'm turned loose on the world (which isn't at all unlikely, considering how badly things are going on with me at home), he's just the man to give me a hint or two in the right direction. I shall certainly go and see him on Thursday; something may come of it, one of these days."

Zack was a careless guesser; but, in this case, he guessed right. Something *did* come of it.

## CHAPTER II.

### THE PRODIGAL'S RETURN.

WHEN Zack reached Baregrove square, it was four in the morning. The neighboring church clock struck the hour as he approached his own door.

Immediately after parting with Mr. Marksman, malicious fate so ordained it that he passed one of those late—or, to speak more correctly, early—public-houses, which are open to customers during the "small hours" of the morning. He was parched with thirst; and the hiccuping fit which had seized him in the company of his new friend had not yet subsided. "Suppose I try what a drop of brandy will do for me," exclaimed Zack, stopping at the fatal entrance of the public-house.

He went in lightly and easily enough. He came out with some awkwardness, and no little difficulty. However, he had achieved his purpose of curing the hiccups. The remedy employed, acted, to be sure, on his legs as well as his stomach—but that was a trifling physiological eccentricity quite unworthy of notice.

He was far too exclusively occupied in thinking of the eccentric Mr. Marksman, and in chuckling over the remembrance of the agreeably riotous train of circumstances which had brought his new acquaintance and himself together, to take any notice of his own personal condition, or to observe that his course over the pavement was of a somewhat sinuous nature, as he walked home. It was only when he pulled the door-key out of his pocket, and tried to put it into the key-hole, that his attention was fairly directed on himself; and then he discovered that his hands were slightly help-

less, and that he was also by no means rigidly steady on his legs.

There are some men whose minds get drunk, and some men whose bodies get drunk, under the influence of intoxicating liquor. Zack belonged to the second class. He was perfectly capable of understanding what was said to him, and of knowing what he said himself, long after his utterance had grown thick, and his gait had become perilously uncertain. He was now quite conscious that his visit to the public-house had by no means tended to sober him; and quite awake to the importance of noiselessly stealing up to bed—but he was, at the same time, totally unable to put the key into the door at the first attempt, or to look comfortably for the keyhole, without previously leaning against the area railings at his side.

"Steady," muttered Zack, "I'm done for if I make any row." Here he felt for the keyhole, and guided the key elaborately with his left hand, into its proper place. He next opened the door, so quietly that he was astonished at himself—entered the passage with marvellous stealthiness—then closed the door again, and cried "Hush!" when he found that he had let the lock go a little too noisily.

He listened before he attempted to light his candle. The air of the house felt strangely close and hot, after the air out-of-doors. The dark stillness above and around him was instinct with an awful and virtuous repose; and was deepened ominously by the solemn *tick-tick* of the kitchen-clock—never audible from the passage in the daytime; terribly and incomprehensibly distinct at this moment.

"I won't bolt the door," he whispered to himself, "till I have struck a—" Here the unreliability of brandy as a curative agent in cases of fermentation in the stomach, was palpably demonstrated by the return of the hiccuping fit. "Hush!" cried Zack for the second time, terrified at the violence and suddenness of the relapse, and clapping his hand to his mouth when it was too late.

After groping, on his knees, with extraordinary perseverance all round the rim of his bedroom candlestick, which stood on one of the hall-chairs, he succeeded—not in finding the box of matches—but in knocking it inexplicably off the chair, and sending it rolling over the stone floor, until it was stopped by the opposite wall. With some difficulty he captured it, and struck a light. Never, in all Zack's experience, had any former matches caught flame with such a shrill report, as was produced from the one disastrous and diabolical match, which he happened to select to light his candle with.

The next thing to be done was to bolt the door. He succeeded very well with the bolt at the top; but failed signally with the

bolt at the bottom, which appeared particularly difficult to deal with that night; for it first of all creaked fiercely on being moved—then stuck spitefully just at the entrance of the staple—then slipped all of a sudden, under moderate pressure, and ran like lightning into its appointed place, with a bang of malicious triumph. "If that don't bring the governor down," thought Zack, listening with all his ears, and stifling the hiccups with all his might, "he's a harder sleeper than I take him for."

But no door opened, no voice called, no sound of any kind broke the mysterious stillness of the bedroom regions. Zack sat down on the stairs, and took his boots off—got up again with some little difficulty, listened, took his candlestick, listened once more, whispered to himself, "Now for it!" and began the perilous ascent to his own room.

He held tight by the banisters, only falling against them, and making them crack from top to bottom, once, before he reached the drawing-room landing. He ascended the second flight of stairs without casualties of any kind, until he got to the top step, close by his father's bedroom door. Here, by a dire fatality, the stifled hiccups burst beyond all control; and distinctly asserted themselves by one convulsive yelp, which betrayed Zack into a start of horror. The start shook his candlestick: the extinguisher, which lay loose in it, dropped out, hopped playfully down the stone-stairs, and rolled over the landing with a loud and lively ring—a devilish and brazen flourish of exultation in honor of its own activity.

"O Lord!" faintly ejaculated Zack, as he heard somebody's voice speaking, and somebody's body moving, in the bedroom; and remembered that he had to mount another flight of stairs—wooden stairs, this time—before he got to his own quarters on the garret-floor.

He went up, however, directly, with the recklessness of despair; every separate stair creaking and cracking under him, as if a young elephant had been retreating to bed instead of a young man. He blew out his light, tore off his clothes, and, slipping between the sheets, began to breathe elaborately, as if he was fast asleep—in the desperate hope of being still able to deceive his father, if Mr. Thorpe came up-stairs to look after him.

But another and a last accident, the direst of all, baffled his plans and ruthlessly betrayed him. No sooner had he assumed a recumbent position than a lusty and ceaseless singing began in his ears, which bewildered and half deafened him. His bed, the room, the house, the whole world tore round and round, and heaved up and down frantically with him. He ceased to be a human being: he became a giddy atom,



spinning drunkenly in illimitable space. He started up in bed, and was recalled to a sense of his humanity by a cold perspiration and a deathly qualm. Hiccups burst from him no longer; but they were succeeded by another and a louder series of sounds—sounds familiar to everybody who has ever been at sea—sounds nautically and lamentably associated with white basins, whirling waves, and misery of mortal stomach's wailing in emetic despair.

In the momentary pauses between the rapidly successive attacks of the malady which now overwhelmed him, and which he attributed in after-life entirely to the dyspeptic influences of toasted cheese, Zack was faintly conscious of the sound of slippers ascending the stairs. His back was to the door. He had no strength to move, no courage to look round, no voice to raise in supplication. He knew that his door opened; that a light came into the room; that a voice cried "Degraded beast!" that the door was suddenly shut again with a bang; and that he was left once more in total darkness. He did not care for the light, or the voice, or the banging of the door; he did not think of them afterward, he did not mourn over the past, or speculate on the future. He just sank back on his pillow with a gasp, drew the clothes over him with a groan, and fell asleep, blissfully reckless of the retribution that was to come with the coming daylight.

When he woke late the next morning—conscious of nothing, at first, except that it was thawing fast out of doors, and that he had a violent headache, but gradually recalled to a remembrance of the memorable fight in the Temple of Harmony by a sense of soreness in his ribs, and a growing conviction that his nose had become too large for his face—Zack's memory began, correctly though confusedly, to retrace the circumstances attending his return home, and his disastrous journey up-stairs to bed. With these recollections were mingled others of the light that had penetrated into his room, after his own candle was out; of the voice that had denounced him as a "degraded beast;" and of the banging of the door which had followed. There could be no doubt that it was his father who had entered the room and apostrophized him in the briefly emphatic terms which he was now calling to mind. Never had Mr. Thorpe, on any former occasion, been known to call names, or bang doors. It was quite clear that he had discovered everything; and was exasperated with his son as he had never been exasperated with any other human being before in his life.

Just as Zack arrived at this conclusion, he heard the rustling of his mother's dress on the stairs, and Mrs. Thorpe, with her handkerchief to her eyes, presented

herself wofully at his bedside. Profoundly and penitently wretched, he tried to gain his mother's forgiveness before he encountered his father's wrath. To do him justice, he was so thoroughly ashamed to meet her eye, that he turned his face to the wall, and in that position confessed everything, vowed amendment for the future and for ever, declared his readiness to make any atonement that was desired of him; and, in short, appealed to his mother's compassion in the most moving terms, and with the most vehement protestations that he had ever addressed to her.

But the only effect he produced on Mrs. Thorpe was to make her walk up and down the room in violent agitation, sobbing bitterly. Now and then, a few words burst lamentably and incoherently from her lips. They were just articulate enough for him to gather from them, that his father had found out everything, had suffered in consequence from an attack of palpitations of the heart, and had felt himself, on rising that morning, so unequal, both in mind and body, to deal unaided with the enormity of his son's offence, that he had just gone out to seek Mr. Yollop's advice as to what it would be best for him to do, as a Christian and a parent, under the shocking and shameful emergency in which he was now placed.

On discovering this, Zack's penitence changed instantly into a curious mixture of indignation and alarm. He turned round quickly toward his mother; out, before he could open his lips, she told him, speaking with a sudden and unexampled severity of tone, that he was on no account to think of going to the office as usual, but was to wait at home until his father's return—and then hurried from the room. The fact was, that Mrs. Thorpe distrusted her own inflexibility, if she stayed too long in the presence of her penitent son; but Zack could not, unhappily, know this. He could only see that she left him abruptly, after delivering an ominous message; and could only place the gloomiest and most disheartening interpretation on her conduct.

"When mother turns against me, I've lost my last chance, and nothing's left for it but to—" he stopped before he ended the sentence, and sat up in bed, deliberating with himself for a minute or two. "I could make up my mind to bear anything from the governor, because he has a right to row me, after what I've done. But, if I stand old Yollop again, I'll be—" here, whatever Zack said was smothered in the sound of a blow, expressive of fury and despair, which he administered to the mattress on which he was sitting. Having relieved himself thus, he jumped out of bed, pronouncing at last in real earnest those few words of fatal slang which had often

burst from his lips, in other days, only as an empty threat:—

"It's all up with me; I must bolt from home."

He refreshed both mind and body by a good wash; but still his resolution did not falter. He hurried on his clothes, looked out of the window, listened at his door; and all this time his purpose never changed. Remembering but too well the persecution he had already suffered at the hands of Mr. Yollop, the conviction that it would now be repeated with fourfold severity was enough of itself to keep him firm to his desperate intention: enough without the additional stimulus of anticipating all that he might have to suffer from his father's anger, or of revelling in the idea of future freedom from the monotonous servitude of his office-life.

"I'll make this help to keep me till I see what can be done," thought he, putting on a gold watch and chain which had been presented to him by his grandfather. "Poor old Goodworth! he said he had made a present to the pawnbroker when he gave it to me. But I'll take it out of pledge again with the very first—" here his thoughts veered round suddenly, at the sight of his pocket-book, to his strange companion of the past night. As he reflected on the appointment for Thursday morning, his eyes brightened, and he said to himself aloud, while he turned resolutely to the door, "That queer fellow talked of going back to America; if I can't do anything else, I'll go back with him!"

Just as his hand was on the lock, he was startled by a knock at the door. He opened it and found the housemaid on the landing with a letter for him. Returning to the window, he hastily undid the envelope. Several gayly-printed invitation cards with gilt-edges dropped out. There was a letter among them, which proved to be in Mr. Blyth's handwriting, and ran thus:—

"Wednesday.

"MY DEAR ZACK: The enclosed are the tickets for my picture-show, which I told you about yesterday evening. I send them now, instead of waiting to give them to you to-night, at Lavvie's suggestion. She thinks only three days' notice, from now to Saturday, rather short; and considers it advisable to save even a few hours, so as to enable you to give your friends the most time possible to make their arrangements conveniently for coming to my studio. Post all the invitation-tickets, therefore, that you send about among your connections, at once, as I am posting mine; and you will save a day by that means, which is a good deal. Patty is obliged to pass your house this morning, on an errand, so I send my letter by her. How conveniently things sometimes turn out; don't they?"

"Introduce anybody you like, but I should prefer *intellectual* people; my figure-subject of 'Columbus in sight of the New World' being treated mystically, and adapted to tax the popular mind to the utmost, as a work of high art that nobody can hope to understand in a hurry.

"I am beginning to brush up the painting-room for visitors already. Madonna is helping me with the ornamental part, as only Madonna can. She finds everything, and does everything, and runs up and down-stairs to let Lavvie know how we are getting on, while I am only thinking about it. With such a bright, good, loving creature to decorate my painting-room, the masterly old place looks like an enchanted palace already; and I am the happiest artist that ever handled a mahl-stick.

"I remain, my dear Zack, affectionately yours,  
"V. BLYTH."

The perusal of this letter reminded Zack of certain recent aspirations in the direction of the fine arts, which had escaped his slippery memory altogether, while he was thinking of his future prospects. "I'll stick to my first idea," thought he, "and be an artist, if Blyth will let me, after what's happened. If he won't, I've got Mat to fall back upon; and I'll run as wild in America as ever he did."

Reflecting thus, Zack descended cautiously to the parlor, which was called a "library." The open door showed him that no one was in the room. He went in; and, in great haste, scrawled the following answer to Mr. Blyth's letter:—

"MY DEAR BLYTH: Thank you for the tickets. I have got into a most dreadful scrape, having been found out coming home groggy at four in the morning, which I did by cribbing the family door-key. The row in store for me after this is so tremendous, that I am going to make a bolt of it. I write these lines in a tearing hurry and a dreadful fright, for fear the governor should come home before I have done—he having gone to Yollop's to set the parson at me again worse than ever.

"I can't come to you to-night, because your house would be the first place they would send to after me; and I don't want to mix you up in the row. But I mean to be an artist, if you won't desert me. Don't, old fellow! I know I'm a d—d scamp; but I'll try and be a reformed character, if you will only stick by me. When you take your walk to-morrow, I shall be at the turnpike in the Laburnum road, waiting for you, at three o'clock. If you won't come there, or won't speak to me when you do come, I shall leave England, and take to something desperate.

"I have got a new friend—the best and most interesting fellow in the world. He



has been half his life in the wilds of America; so, if you don't give me the go-by, I shall bring him to see your picture of Columbus.

"I feel so miserable, and have got such a headache, that I can't write any more.

"Ever yours,

"Z. THORPE, JR."

After directing this letter, and placing it in his pocket to be put into the post by his own hand, Zack looked toward the door, and hesitated—then advanced a step or two to get out—then paused thoughtfully—and ended by returning to the writing-table, and taking a fresh sheet of paper out of the portfolio before him.

"I can't leave the old lady (though she won't forgive me) without writing a line to keep up her spirits, and say good-by," thought he, as he dipped the pen in the ink, and began in his usual dashing, scrawling way. But he could not get beyond "My dear Mother." The writing of those three words seemed to have suddenly paralyzed him. The strong hand that had struck out so sturdily all through the fight, trembled now at merely touching a sheet of paper. Still he tried desperately to write something, even if it were only the one word, "good-by;" tried till the tears came into his eyes, and made all further effort hopeless.

He crumpled up the paper and rose hastily, brushing away the tears with his hand, and feeling a strange dread and distrust of himself as he did so. It was rarely, very rarely, that his eyes were moistened as they were moistened now. Few human beings have lived to be twenty years of age without shedding more tears than had ever been shed by Zack.

"I can't write to her while I'm at home, and I know she's in the next room to me. I will send her a letter when I'm out of the house, saying it's only for a little time, and that I'm coming back when the angry part of this infernal business is all blown over." Such was his resolution, as he tore up the crumpled paper, and went out quickly into the passage.

He took his hat from the table. *His* hat? No, he remembered that it was the hat which had been taken from the man at the tavern. At the most momentous instant of his life—when his heart was bowing down before the thought of his mother—when he was leaving home in secret, perhaps for ever—the current of his thoughts could be incomprehensibly stopped and altered in its course by the trumpery influence of such a trifle as this!

It was thus with him; it is thus with all of us. Our faculties are never more completely at the mercy of the smallest interests of our being, than when they appear

to be most fully absorbed by the mightiest. And it is often well for us that there exists this seeming imperfection in our nature. The first cure of many a grief, after the hour of parting, or in the house of death, has begun, insensibly to ourselves, with the first moment when we were betrayed into thinking of so little a thing even as a daily meal.

The rain which had accompanied the thaw was falling faster and faster; inside the house was dead silence, and outside it damp desolation, as Zack opened the street door; and, without hesitating a moment dashed out desperately through mud and wet, to cast himself loose on the thronged world of London as a fugitive from his own home.

His first thoughts, obedient to the strange direction which accident had given to them, were all occupied in devising the best method of sending back the hat he wore to the man from whom it had been taken. A plan for accomplishing this soon suggested itself to him; and then his mind returned once more, of its own accord, to the reflections that had filled it while he was trying in vain to write a farewell letter to his mother. Before he got out of Baregrove square, he stopped, and looked back from an angle in the pavement which gave him a view of his father's house.

He paused thus; the recollections of weeks, months, years past, all whirling through his memory in a few moments of time. He paused, looking through the damp, foggy atmosphere, at the door which he had just left—never, it might be, to approach it again; then moved away, buttoned his coat over his chest with trembling, impatient fingers, and saying to himself, "I've done it, and nothing can undo it now," turned his back resolutely on Baregrove square.

### CHAPTER III.

#### MR. MARKSMAN'S COUNTRY TRIP

KIRK STREET, Wendover market, was not exactly the place which most gentlemen, having money at their disposal, would choose to reside in, on returning to their native country after long expatriation. The neighborhood was densely populous, and by no means widely respectable; and the street itself exhibited a vagabond liveliness of character, productive of almost every known species of public nuisance of the noisy sort. Here the men of the fustian-jacket and sealskin cap clustered tumultuously round the lintels of the gin-shop doors. Here ballad-bellowing, and organ-grinding, and voices of costermongers, singing of

poor men's luxuries, never ceased all through the hum of day, and penetrated far into the frowsy repose of latest night. Here, on Saturday evenings especially, the butcher smacked with triumphant hand the fat carcasses that hung around him; and, flourishing his steel, roared aloud to every woman who passed the shop-door with a basket, to come in and buy. Here the peripatetic green-grocer stood up, a vocal commercial prop of his country, proclaiming the prices current of the apple and onion markets lustily from the top of a donkey-cart. Here, with foul frequency, the language of the natives was interspersed with such words as reporters indicate in the newspapers by an expressive black line; and on this "beat," more than on most others, the night police were especially chosen from men of mighty strength to protect the sober part of the street community, and of notable cunning to persuade the drunken part to retire harmlessly brawling into the domestic (or wife-beating) seclusion of their own homes.

Such was the place in which Mr. Matthew Marksman had set up his residence, after twenty years of wandering amid the wilds of the great American continent.

On arriving in London he had looked about him to see what civilized life appeared like, after his long absence, and had found it in its fashionable, wealthy, and respectable aspects, without external interest or character of any kind—essentially negative, intolerably dull. Descending next to the poor and the populous aspects, he had succeeded at last in discovering something to look at. The struggle of life, with all its antagonistic glories and degradations in daily conflict which should be uppermost, was here fully exposed to view—hidden by no comfortable curtain of conventionality—hardly covered even by a veil of decency over its baser acts. Few stages could have been sought out which more freely displayed the dramatic low life of London than the stage presented by Kirk street. So at that vagabond thoroughfare Mr. Marksman, being somewhat of a vagabond himself, paused sympathetically; and, entering the first house whose windows informed him that rooms were to be let within, planted his stake in the country at last, by taking a back and front British first floor for a week certain.

Never was found of any order or degree known to make such conditions with a landlord as were made by Mr. Marksman. Every household convenience with which the people at the lodgings could offer to accommodate him, he considered to be a species of domestic nuisance it was particularly desirable to get rid of. He stipulated that nobody should be allowed to clean his room but himself; that the servant of all work should never attempt to make his bed,

or offer to put sheets on it, or venture to cook him a bit of dinner when he stopped at home; and that he should be free to stay away unexpectedly for days and nights together, if he chose, without either landlord or landlady presuming to be anxious or to make inquiries about him, as long as they had his rent in their pockets. This rent he willingly covenanted to pay beforehand, week by week, as long as his stay lasted; and he was also liberally ready to fee the servant occasionally, provided she would engage solemnly "not to bother his life by doing anything for him."

The proprietor of the house (and tobacco-shop) was at first extremely astonished, and extremely inclined to be distrustful; but as he was likewise extremely familiar with poverty, he was not proof against the auriferous halo which the production of a handful of bright sovereigns shed gloriously over the personal eccentricities of the new lodger. The bargain was struck; and Mr. Marksman went away directly to fetch his luggage.

After an absence of some little time, he returned with a large corn-sack on his back and a long rifle in his hand. These articles were his luggage.

First putting the rifle on his bed, in the back room, he cleared away all the little second-hand furniture with which the front room was decorated, packing the three rickety chairs together in one corner, and turning up the cracked round table in another. Then, untying a piece of cord that secured the mouth of the corn-sack, he emptied it, over his shoulder, into the middle of the room—just (as the landlady afterward said) as if it was coals coming in instead of luggage. Among the things which fell out on the floor in a heap, were—some bearskins and a splendid buffalo-hide, neatly packed; a pipe, two red flannel shirts, a tobacco-pouch, and an Indian blanket; a leather bag, a gunpowder flask, two squares of yellow soap, a bullet-mould, and a nightcap; a tomahawk, a paper of nails, a scrubbing-brush, a hammer, and an old gridiron. Having emptied the sack, Mr. Marksman took up the buffalo-hide, and spread it out on his bed, with a very expressive sneer at the patchwork counterpane and meagre curtains. He next threw down the bearskins, with the empty sack under them, in an unoccupied corner; propped up the leather bag between two angles of the wall; took his pipe from the floor; left everything else lying in the middle of the room; and, sitting down on the bearskins with his back against the bag, told the astonished landlord that he was quite settled and comfortable now, and would thank him to go down-stairs, and send up a pound of the strongest tobacco he had in the shop.



Mr. Marksman's subsequent proceedings during the rest of the day, especially such as were connected with his method of laying in a stock of provisions, and cooking his own dinner, exhibited the same extraordinary disregard of all civilized precedent, which had marked his first entry into the lodgings. After he had dined, he took a nap on his bearskins; woke up restless, and grumbling at the close air and the confined room; smoked a long series of pipes, looking out of window all the time with quietly observant, constantly attentive eyes; and, finally, rising to the climax of all previous oddities, came down-stairs when the tobacco-shop was being shut up after the closing of the neighboring theatre, and coolly asked which was his nearest way into the country, as he wanted to clear his head, and stretch his legs, by making a walking night of it in the fresh air.

He began the next morning by cleaning both his rooms thoroughly with his own hands, as he had told the landlord he would; and seemed to enjoy the occupation mightily in his own grim, grave way. His dining, napping, smoking, and observant study of the street-view from his window, followed as on the previous day. But at night, instead of setting forth into the country as before, he wandered into the streets; and, in the course of his walk, happened to pass the door of the Temple of Harmony. What happened to him there is already known; but what became of him afterward remains to be seen.

On leaving Zack, he walked straight on; not slackening his pace, not noticing whether he went, not turning to go back till day-break. It was past nine o'clock before he presented himself at the tobacco-shop, bringing in with him a goodly share of mud and wet from the thawing ground and rainy sky outside. His long walk did not seem to have relieved the uneasiness of mind which had induced him to separate so suddenly from Zack. He talked almost perpetually to himself in a muttering, incoherent way; his heavy brow was contracted, and the scars of the old wounds on his face looked angry and red. The first thing he did was to make some inquiries of his landlord relating to railway travelling, and to the part of London in which a certain terminus that he had been told of was situated. Finding it not easy to make him understand any directions connected with this latter point, the shopkeeper suggested sending for a cab to take him to the railway. He briefly assented to that arrangement; occupying the time before the vehicle arrived, in walking sullenly backward and forward over the pavement in front of the shop-door.

When the cab came to take him up, he insisted, with characteristic regardlessness of appearances, on riding upon the roof,

because he could get more air to blow over him, and more space for stretching his legs in, there than inside. Arriving in this irregular and vagabond fashion at the terminus, he took his ticket for DIBBLEDEAN, a quiet little market-town in one of the midland counties.

When he was set down at the station, he looked about him rather perplexedly at first; but soon appeared to recognise a road, visible at some little distance, which led to the town; and toward which he immediately directed his steps, scorning all offers of accommodation from the local omnibus.

It did not happen to be market-day; and the thaw looked even more dreary at Dibbledean than it looked in London. Down the whole perspective of the High street there appeared only three human figures—a woman in patters; a child under a large umbrella; and a man with a hamper on his back, walking toward the yard of the principal inn.

Mr. Marksman had slackened his pace more and more, as he approached the town, until he slackened it altogether at last, by coming to a dead stand-still under the walls of the old church, which stood at one extremity of the High street, in what seemed to be the suburban district of Dibbledean. He waited for some time, looking over the low parapet-wall which divided the churchyard from the road, then slowly approached a gate leading to a path among the grave-stones, stopped at it—apparently changed his purpose—and, turning off abruptly, walked up the High street.

He did not pause again till he arrived opposite a long, low, gabled-house, evidently one of the oldest buildings in the place, though brightly painted and white-washed to look as new and unpicturesque as possible. The basement-story was divided into two shops; which, however, proclaimed themselves as belonging now, and having belonged also in former days, to one and the same family. Over the larger of the two was painted in letters of goodly size:—

*Bradford and Son (late Joshua Grice),  
Linen-drappers, Hosiers, &c., &c.*

The board on which these words were traced, was continued over the smaller shop; where it was additionally superscribed thus:—

*Mrs. Bradford (late Johanna Grice),  
Milliner and Dressmaker.*

Regardless of rain, and droppings from eaves that trickle heavily down his hat and coat, Mr. Marksman stands motionless, reading and re-reading these inscriptions from the opposite side of the way. Though the whole man, from top to toe, looks like the very impersonation of firmness, he nevertheless hesitates most unnaturally now. He knows that he has a certain discovery

to make: he knows that he must begin the search which is to lead to that discovery, either in the shop before him, or in the churchyard which he has left behind him: but for some time he can not choose his alternative. At last, he decides to begin with the churchyard, and retraces his steps accordingly.

He enters quickly by the gate at which he delayed before; and pursues the path among the graves a little way. Then striking off over the grass after a moment's consideration and looking about him, he winds his course hither and thither among the turf mounds; and stops suddenly at a plain flat tombstone, raised horizontally above the earth by a foot or so of brickwork. Bending down over it, he reads the characters engraved on the slab.

There are four inscriptions, all of the simplest and shortest kind; comprising nothing but a record of the names, ages, and birth and death dates of the dead who lie beneath. The first two inscriptions notify the deaths of children:—"Joshua Grice, son of Joshua and Susan Grice, of this parish, aged four years;" and "Susan Grice, daughter of the above, aged thirteen years." The next death recorded is the mother's: and the last is the father's, at the age of sixty-two. Below this follows a quotation from the New Testament: "*Come unto me all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest.*" It is on these lines, and on the record above them of the death of Joshua Grice the elder, that the eyes of the lonely reader rest the longest; his lips murmuring several times, as he looks down on the letters: "He lived to be an old man—he lived to be an old man, after all!"

There is sufficient vacant space left toward the bottom of the tombstone, for two or three more inscriptions; and it would appear that Mr. Marksman expected to have seen more. He looks intently at the vacant space, and measures it roughly with his fingers, comparing it with the space above, which is occupied by letters. "Not there," he says to himself; "not there at any rate!" as he leaves the churchyard, and walks back to the town.

This time he enters the double shop—the hosiery division of it—without hesitation. No one is there, but the young man who serves behind the counter. And right glad the young man is, having been long left without a soul to speak to on that rainy morning, to see some one—even a stranger with a queer skull-cap under his hat—enter the shop at last.

What can he serve the gentleman with? The gentleman does not come to buy. He only wants to know if the young man can tell him whether Johanna Grice, who used to keep the dressmaker's shop, is still living.

Oh yes! the young man can tell him that, and a great deal more besides; being glad to feel his own tongue wag after long silence and depressing loneliness behind the counter. Miss Grice (the young man is more polite in speaking of her than the stranger)—Miss Grice, whose brother once had the business now carried on by Bradford and Son, still lives, all by herself, in the town; and is a very curious old person, who never goes out, and lets nobody inside her doors. Most of her old friends are dead; and those who are still alive she has broken with. She is full of fierce, wild ways; is generally suspected of being crazy; and is execrated by the boys of Dibbledean as an "old tiger-cat." The young man thinks it possible that her intellects may have been a little shaken somehow, years ago, and before his time, by a dreadful scandal in the family, which quite crushed them down; being very respectable, religious people. It was a scandal that made a great stir, he believes, in its day; and was about—

Here the young man is interrupted, in a very peculiar and uncivil manner, as he thinks, by the stranger, who desires to know nothing about the scandal, but has another question to ask. This question seems to be rather a difficult one to put; for he begins it two or three times, in two or three different forms of words, and can not get on with it. At last, he ends by asking, generally, whether any other members of old Mr. Grice's family are still alive.

For a moment or so the young man is stupid and puzzled, and doesn't know what other members the gentleman means. Old Mrs. Grice died some time ago; and there were two children who died young, and whose names are in the churchyard. Does the gentleman mean?—ah, yes, to be sure! of course he must—the second daughter, who folks say lived and grew up beautiful, and was, as the story goes, the cause of all the scandal. She ran away, and died miserably somehow—nobody knows how; and was supposed to have been buried like a pauper somewhere—nobody knows where, except perhaps Miss Grice. But it all happened a long time ago, and really—

The young man stops short and looks perplexed. A sudden change has passed over the strange gentleman's face. His swarthy cheeks have turned to a cold clay color, through which those two strange scars seem to burn fiercer than ever, like streaks of fire. His heavy hand and arm tremble a little as he leans against the counter. Is he going to be taken ill? No—this man's heart is strong; his will is resolute; his body has been used to hard shocks and sharp pangs; and he will recover himself as many other men in his condition



perhaps could not. He falters a little, but he walks at once from the counter to the door—turns round there—and asks where Johanna Grice lives. The young man says, the second turning to the right, down a street which ends in a lane of cottages. Miss Grice's is the last cottage on the left hand; but he can assure the gentleman that it will be quite useless to go there, for she lets nobody in. The gentleman thanks him, and goes, nevertheless.

"I didn't think it would have took me so," he says, walking quickly up the street; "and it wouldn't if I'd heard it anywhere else. But I'm not the man I was, now I'm in the old place again. Over twenty year of hardening, don't seem to have hardened me yet!"

He follows the directions given him, correctly enough, arrives at the last cottage on his left hand, and tries the garden-gate. It is locked; and there is no bell to ring. But the paling is low, and Mr. Marksman is not scrupulous. He gets over it, and advances to the cottage-door. It opens, like other doors in the country, merely by turning the handle of the lock. He goes in without any hesitation, and enters the first room into which the passage leads him. It is a small parlor; and, at the back-window, which looks out on a garden, sits Johanna Grice, a thin, dwarfish old woman, poring over a big book that looks like a Bible. She starts from her chair, as she hears the sound of footsteps, and totters up fiercely, with wild wandering gray eyes, and horny threatening hands to meet the intruder. He lets her come close to him; then mentions a name—pronouncing it twice, very distinctly.

She pauses instantly, livid pale, with gaping lips, and arms hanging rigid at her side; as if that name, or the voice in which it was uttered, had frozen up in a moment all the little life left in her. Then she moves back slowly, groping with her hands like one in the dark—back, till she touches the wall of the room. Against this she leans, trembling violently; not speaking a word; her wild eyes staring panic-stricken on the man who is confronting her.

He sits down unbidden, and asks if she does not remember him. No answer is given: no movement made that might serve instead of answer. He asks again; a little impatiently this time. She nods her head and stares on him—still speechless, still trembling.

He tells her what he has heard at the shop; and, using the shopman's phrases, asks whether it is true that the daughter of old Mr. Grice, who was the cause of all the scandal in the family, has died long since, away from her home, and in a miserable way.

Her eyes flash at him fiercely—then shrink before his. She cowers closer into

the corner of the wall; and tells him in a faint, quavering voice that she will not, and dare not speak of that which he calls a scandal.

He answers that he wants to know nothing of the scandal itself; for, years and years ago, he got a letter that told him of it when it happened—a letter that he has kept ever since, and that he will never forget. What he *does* want to know, and *will* know is, whether it be true that Mary (he mentions the name now) is dead.

There is something in his look, as he speaks, which seems to oblige her to answer, against her will. She says, "Yes; and trembles more violently than ever.

He clasps his hands together; his head droops a little; dark shadows seem to move over his bent face; and the scars of the old wounds deepen to a livid violet hue. He begins to speak again—then stops suddenly, and remains for some minutes speechless.

His silence and hesitation seem to inspire Johanna Grice with sudden confidence and courage. She moves a little away from the wall; and a gleam of evil triumph lightens over her face, as she reiterates her last answer of her own accord. Yes! the wretch who ruined the good name of the family is dead—dead, and buried far off, in some grave by herself—not in the same grave where her honest kindred lie—not there, in the churchyard, with her father and mother—oh, no, thank God, not there!

He looks up at her instantly, when she says these words. There is some warning influence in his eye, as it rests on her, which sends her cowering back again to her former place against the wall. He asks sternly where Mary is buried. The reply—doled out doggedly and slowly, forced from her word by word—is, that she was buried among strangers, as she deserved to be; at a place called Bangbury; far away in the next county, where she died, and where money was sent to bury her.

His manner becomes less roughly imperative; his eyes soften; his voice saddens in tone, when he speaks again. And yet, the next question that he puts to Johanna Grice seems to pierce her to the quick, to try her to the heart, as no questioning has tried her before. The muscles are writhing on her haggard face, her breath is bursting from her in quick, fierce pantings, as he asks, whether it was only suspicion, or really the truth, that Mary was with child when she left her home.

No answer is given to him. He repeats the question, and insists on having one. Was it suspicion or truth? The reply hisses out at him in one whispered word—Truth.

Was the child born alive?

The answer comes again in the same harsh whisper; the panting breath heaving

quicker and quicker yet, and a dark blood-tinge rising slowly over the fleshless, yellow cheek—Yes: born alive.

What became of it?

She never saw it; never asked about it; never knew. While she replies thus, the whispering accents change, and rise sullenly to hoarse, distinct tones. The questioner murmurs something to himself—half-articulate words of cursing against the merciless who never forgive—then becomes silent again. During this silence, the dark blood-tinge spreads fast over Johanna Grice's face: and the pantings quicken to moaning, breathless gasps. But it is not till he speaks to her once more that the smothered fury flashes out into flaming rage. Then, even as he raises his head and opens his lips, she staggers, with outstretched arms, up to the table at which she had been reading when he came in; and strikes her bony hands on the open Bible: and swears by the Word of Truth in that Book, that she will answer him no more.

He rises calmly; and with something of contempt in his look, approaches the table, and speaks. But his voice is drowned by hers, bursting from her in screams of fury. No! no! no! Not a word more! How dare he come there, with his shameless face and his threatening eyes, and make her speak of what should never have passed her lips again—never till she went up to render her account at the judgment-seat? How dare he come between her and God, with his talk of this world, which it is profanation for her to hear while she is preparing for the next? Relations! let him not speak to her of relations. The only kindred she ever cared to own lie heart-broken under the great stone in the churchyard. Relations! if they all came to life again that very minute, what could she have to do with them, whose only relation was death? Yes; death, that was father, mother, brother, sister to her now! Death, that was waiting to take her in God's good time. What! would he stay on yet? stay on in spite of her? stay after she had sworn not to answer him another word?

Yes: let her rave at him as she pleases, he *will* stay. He is resolved to know more yet. Did Mary leave nothing behind her, in the bitter day when she fled from her home? Give him an answer to that, for that he is determined to know; and more, too, afterward—more, till he knows all.

Some suddenly-conceived resolution seems to calm the first fury of her passion, while he says these words. She stretches out her hand quickly, and grips him by the arm, and looks up in his face with a wicked exultation in her wild eyes. He *will* know all, will he? Then he shall! but not from her lips! All the black iniquity shall be

exposed before him from first to last. It shall break his heart; and crush him into old age like hers! He is bent on knowing what that ruined wretch left behind her, is he? Let him follow her, then, and he shall see!

Between the leaves of Johanna Grice's bible there is a key, which seems to be used as a marker. She takes it out, and leads the way, with toilsome step and hands outstretched for support, to the wall on one side, and the banisters on the other, up the one flight of stairs which communicates with the bedroom story of the cottage.

He follows close behind her; and is standing by her side, when she opens a door, and points into a room, telling him to take what he finds there, and then go—she cares not whither, so long as he goes from her.

She descends the stairs again, as he enters the room. There is a close, faint, airless smell in it. Cobwebs, pendulous and brown with dirt, hang from the ceiling. The grimy window-panes soil and sadden all the light that pours through them faintly. He looks round him hastily, and sees no furniture anywhere; no sign that the room has ever been lived in, ever entered even, for years and years past. He looks again, more carefully; and detects, in one dim corner, something covered with dust and dirt, which looks like a small box.

He pulls it out toward the window. Dust flies from it in clouds. Loathsome, crawling creatures creep from under it, and from off it. He stirs it with his foot still nearer to the faint light; and sees that it is a common deal-box, corded. He looks closer, and through cobwebs, and dead insects, and foul stains of all kinds, spells out a name that is painted on it: MARY GRICE.

At the sight of that name, and of the pollution that covers it, he pauses, silent and thoughtful: and, at the same moment, hears the parlor-door, below, locked. He stoops hastily, takes up the box by the cord round it, and leaves the room. His hand touches a substance, as it grasps the cord, which does not feel like wood. He examines the box by the clearer light falling on the landing from a window in the roof, and discovers a letter nailed to the cover. There is something written on it; but the paper is dusty, the ink is faded by time, and the characters are hard to decipher. By dint of perseverance, however, he makes out from them this inscription: "Justification of my conduct toward my niece: to be read after my death. JOHANNA GRICE."

As he passes the parlor-door, he hears her voice, reading. He stops and listens. The words that reach his ears seem familiar to them; and yet he knows not, at first, what book they come from. He listens a little longer, and then his recollections of his boyhood and of home help him; and he



knows that the book from which Johanna Grice is reading aloud to herself, is the Bible.

His face darkens, and he goes out quickly into the garden ; but stops before he reaches the paling, and, turning back to the front window of the parlor, looks in. He sees her sitting with her back to him, with elbows on the table, and hands working feverishly in her tangled gray hair. Her voice is still audible, but the words it pronounces can not any longer be distinguished. He waits at the window for a few moments ; then leaves it suddenly, saying to himself, "I wonder the book doesn't strike her dead !" These are his only words of farewell. With this thought in his heart, he turns his back on the cottage, and on Johanna Grice.

Which way shall he betake himself ? Back to the town, or forward into the country ? Forward. The old yearning to be alone, and out of the sight of human beings, has overcome him again.

He goes on through the rain, taking the box with him, and looking about for some sheltered place in which he can open it. After walking nearly a mile, he sees an old cattle-shed, a little way off the road—a rotten, deserted place ; but it may afford some little shelter, even yet : so he enters it.

There is one dry corner left ; dry enough, at least, to suit his purpose. In that he kneels down, and cuts the cord round the box—then hesitates to open it—and begins by tearing away the letter outside, from the nail that fastens it to the cover.

It is a long letter, written in a close, crabbed hand. He runs his eye over it impatiently, till his attention is accidentally caught and arrested by two or three lines, more clearly penned than the rest, near the middle of a page. For many years he has been unused to reading any written characters, and he finds them more troublesome to decipher now than when he was a boy. But he spells out resolutely the words in these few lines that have struck his eye, and finds that they run thus :—

"I have now only to add, before proceeding to the miserable confession of our family dishonor, that I never afterward saw, and only once heard of, the man who tempted my niece to commit the deadly sin which was her ruin in this world, and will be her ruin in the next."

Beyond these words he makes no effort to read further. Few as they are, they have been evidently enough to oppress him with unwelcome recollections and disquieting thoughts, from which he struggles for deliverance resolutely ; and which leave him, when he tears himself free of them at last, with the letter crushed up into a shapeless twist of paper in his hand. Thrusting it hastily into his pocket, without so much as a passing attempt to smooth it out again, he turns once more to the box.

It is sealed up with strips of tape, but not locked. He forces the lid open, and sees inside a few simple articles of woman's wearing-apparel ; a little work-box ; a lace collar, with the needle and thread still sticking in it ; several letters, here tied up in a packet, there scattered carelessly ; a gayly-bound album ; a quantity of dried ferns and flower-leaves that have apparently fallen from between the pages ; a piece of canvass with a slipper-pattern worked on it ; and a black dress waistcoat with some unfinished embroidery on the collar. It is plain to him, at a first glance, that these things have been thrown into the box anyhow, and have been left just as they were thrown. For a moment or two, he keeps his eyes fixed on the strange and sad confusion displayed before him ; then turns away his head, whispering to himself, mournfully, and many times, that name of "Mary," which he has already pronounced while in the presence of Johanna Grice. After a little, he looks back again into the box ; mechanically picks out the different letters that lie scattered about it ; mechanically eyes the broken seals and the addresses on each ; mechanically puts them back again unopened, until he comes to one which feels as if it had something inside it. This circumstance stimulates him into unfolding the enclosure, and examining what the letter may contain.

Nothing but a piece of paper neatly folded. He undoes the folds, and finds part of a lock of hair inside, which he wraps up again the moment he sees it, as if anxious to conceal it from view as soon as possible. The letter he examines more deliberately. It is in a woman's handwriting ; is directed to "Miss Mary Grice, Dibledean ;" and is only dated "Bond Street, London. Wednesday." The post-mark, however, shows that it was written many years ago. It is no very long ; so he sets himself to the task of making it all out from beginning to end.

This is what he reads :—

"MY DEAREST MARY : I have just sent you your pretty hair bracelet by the coach, nicely sealed and packed up by the jeweller. I have directed it to you by your own name, as I direct this, remembering what you told me about your father making it a point of honor never to open your letters and parcels ; and forbidding that ugly aunt Johanna of yours to do so either. I hope you will receive this and the little packet about the same time.

"I will answer for your thinking the pattern of your bracelet much improved, since the new hair has been worked in with the old. How slyly you will run away to your own room, and *blush unseen*, like the flower in the poem, when you look at it ! You may be rather surprised, perhaps, to see some little gold fastenings introduced as ad-

ditions; but this, the jeweller told me, was a matter of necessity. Your poor dear sister's hair being the only material of the bracelet, when you sent it up to me to be altered, was very different from the hair of that faultless true-love of yours that you also sent to be worked in with it. It was, in fact, hardly half long enough to plait up properly with poor Susan's, from end to end; so the jeweller had to join it with little gold clasps, as you will see. It is very prettily run in along with the old hair, though. No country jeweller could have done it half as nicely; so you did well to send it to London, after all. I consider myself rather a judge of these things; and I say positively that it is now the prettiest hair bracelet I ever saw.

"Do you see him as often as ever? He ought to be true and faithful to you, when you show how dearly you love him, by mixing his hair with poor Susan's, whom you were always so fondly attached to. I say he *ought*; but *you* are sure to say he *will*—and I am quite ready, love, to believe that you are the wiser of the two.

"I would write more, but have no time. It is just the regular London season now, and we are worked out of our lives. I envy you dressmakers in the country; and almost wish I was back again at Dibbledean, to be tyrannized over from morning to night by Miss Johanna. I know she is your aunt, my dear; but I can't help saying that I hate her very name!

"Ever your affectionate friend,

"JANE HOLDSWORTH.

"P.S.—The jeweller sent back the hair he did not want; and I, as in duty bound, return it, enclosed, to you, its lawful owner."

Those scars on Mr. Marksman's face, which indicate the stir of strong feelings within him more palpably than either his expression or his manner, begin to burn redly again while he spells his way through this letter. He crumples it up hastily round the enclosure, instead of folding it as it was folded before; and is about to cast it back sharply into the box, when the sight of the wearing apparel and half-finished work lying inside, seems to stay his hand, and teach it on a sudden to move tenderly. He smooths out the paper with care; folds it as it was folded before; and places it very gently among the rest of the letters—then looks at the box thoughtfully for a moment or two; takes from his pocket the letter that he first examined, and drops it in among the others—then suddenly and sharply closes the lid of the box again.

"I can't touch any more of her things," he says to himself: "I can't so much as look at 'em, somehow, without its making me—" he stops to tie up the box; straining

the cords with unnecessary tightness, as if the mere physical exertion of pulling hard at something were a relief to him at this moment. "I'll open it again, and look it over, in a day or two, when I'm away from the old place here," he goes on, jerking sharply at the last knot—"when I'm away from the old place, and have got to be my own man again."

He leaves the shed; regains the road, and stops, looking up and down, and all round him, indecisively. Whither shall he turn his steps now? A thought of going to the place where he has been told "Mary" is buried, to find out her grave, and discover if he can how she died, crosses his mind; but he dismisses it again, believing that it will be better to defer undertaking any such pilgrimage as this, until after he has read all the letters, and carefully examined all the objects in the box. There is nothing, therefore, now to be done, but to go back to London by the next train that stops at Dibbledean station.

The tobacco-shop in Kirk street has had the gas turned on for some hours, and the proprietor is smoking his second evening cheroot at the door, when he sees his strange lodger approach, carrying on this occasion what really looks like a Christian and civilized article of luggage. The tobacconist naturally expects, after having had a little talk with Mr. Marksman on his departure in the morning, to have a little more talk with him on his return at night. Never were expectations more completely frustrated. Mr. Marksman passes his landlord quickly, with an odd altered look in his face; growls out "Good night," and lets himself in at the private door, without speaking another word.

The tobacconist joins his wife behind the counter, and expresses a conviction that something must have gone wrong with the new lodger since he has been down in the country. The tobacconist's wife says, "Let's listen."

Mr. Marksman's room is over the shop, and the house is a London house—or, in other words, is built in the flimsiest possible way, with the flimsiest possible materials. Accordingly, whatever is done above is heard below—even a slight sneeze in, what is called, the "drawingroom," is enough to wake the echoes far and wide in the shop.

They listen; and hear the box Mr. Marksman has brought with him deposited on the floor—all the clay pipes and tin canisters about them rattling responsive to the shock. Next, Mr. Marksman himself is heard to sit down in his usual odd way, and in his usual odd corner, on the bearskins—and, again, the pipes and canisters rattle more sharply than ever. After this all sound ceases; and then the tobacconist's wife reminds her husband that they have not heard



the *whizz* of a lucifer match up-stairs, and that, consequently, the new lodger must be sitting in the dark. \*

Struck by this circumstance, struck still more by the continued absence of all movement on the part of the usually restless Mr. Marksman, they go on listening, at intervals, all through the evening; but hear nothing except the low, rumbling sound of his voice now and then, which proves that he is at least alive, and talking to himself. At last, the shop shuts up; and, for the first time since his arrival, he does not leave his room to go out roaming as usual. The tobacconist walks up-stairs to bed, at the top of the house; and his wife follows him with proper conjugal docility—but only as far as the first-floor landing. There she stops short, kneels down softly, holds her breath, and looks through the keyhole.

When she joins her husband again in the nuptial chamber, she has not much to tell him. She has seen with her own eyes that there is no light in the lodger's room, except what comes in from the gas-lamp in the street. She has just been able to make out Mr. Marksman's bulky figure, crouched up in his usual corner by the window, with his hand on the box, and his head dropped on his breast. She thinks he has fallen off into a sort of uneasy sleep; and she can give a shrewd guess that, if he be in any great trouble, it is all about some woman. For she left him moaning and mumbling in his sleep; and is next to certain that he let out the name of "Mary" two or three times, while she was listening at the keyhole.

#### CHAPTER IV.

##### LOOSE ON THE WORLD.

A QUARTER of an hour's rapid walking took Zack well out of the neighborhood of Baregrove square, and launched him in vagabond independence loose on the world. He had a silk handkerchief and sevenpence halfpenny in his pockets—his available assets consisted of a very handsome gold watch and chain—his only article of baggage was a blackthorn stick—and his anchor of hope was the pawnbroker.

His first action, now that he was his own master, showed that there remained one consideration, at least, connected with his home, which had power to influence him still. He went direct to the nearest stationer's shop that he could find, and there wrote the letter to his mother which he had vainly endeavored to write in the library at Baregrove square. He begged her pardon in it once again—entreated her not to be uneasy about him—declared solemnly that he had only gone away because Mr. Yollop

and his father together would have driven him frantic, and hurried him into the commission of some new enormity, if he had remained—protested that he had already become a reformed character—and promised that he would write a second time and say what his plans for the future were, as soon as they were formed. It was altogether about as awkward, scrambling, and incoherent a letter as ever was composed. But, faulty as it was, Zack felt easier when he had completed it—easier still when he had fairly dropped it into the postoffice along with his other letter to Mr. Valentine Blyth.

The next duty that claimed him was the first great duty of civilized humanity—the filling of an empty purse. Most young gentlemen in his station of life, would have found the process to which he was now reduced of pawning a watch in the streets of London, and in broad daylight, rather an embarrassing one. But Zack was born impervious to a sense of respectability. He marched into the first pawnbroker's he came to with as solemn an air of business, and marched out again with as serene an expression of satisfaction, as if he had just been drawing a handsome salary, or just been delivering a heavy deposit into the hands of his banker.

Once provided with pecuniary resources, Zack left himself at liberty to begin "spending the day" in good earnest, as a free Briton whose pockets were equal to any emergency. Having breakfasted and dried his clothes at a tavern, he set himself to decide at leisure the important question of what he should do next. After much reflection and attentive contemplation of the wretched state of the weather, it occurred to him that a good long ride in a cab, with a bottle of pale ale and a packet of cigars to keep him company, would be a healthy, sensible, and novel kind of amusement to begin with—so he devoted himself to it immediately. Resolving to ride through those parts of London with which he was least familiarly acquainted, he issued directions to the cabman to go over the water first of all, and then to drive on incessantly due east, until further orders. The route thus vaguely indicated took him from the Waterloo road, through the borough and Bermondsey, to Rotherhithe. No more profoundly depressing division of the metropolis could well have been chosen to drive through on a rainy day; but Zack was not to be depressed by anything. He drank, smoked, and revelled luxuriously in the sense of being free again to do as he liked in the daytime. His high spirits were even proof against the back settlements of Rotherhithe, steaming in rain, seething in mud, and smothered in fog. They lasted all through the drive out to the

east, and all through the drive in to the west again; and finally prompted him to try a new frolic, just as the cab entered the regions of the borough once more.

In the neighborhood of the market Zack observed a tavern, displaying in one of its windows a notification that an "ordinary," or British *table d'hôte*, was open inside to all comers, at three o'clock. He stopped the cabman directly. Having heard the clocks strike three about ten minutes ago; and having never seen an "ordinary" in his life, he determined to go into the tavern and dine. He found the dinner just begun, and the society pleasantly "general" in its composition, if it was nothing else. As usual, he got on excellent speaking terms with everybody at table, five minutes after he had sat down; and became particularly familiar and intimate with his four nearest neighbors—a master-butcher, a tripe-dresser, and a brace of fruit-salesmen. The first two of these commercial gentlemen were making a holiday of it; and Zack was making a holiday of it; and they all three grew as open-hearted as possible under the genial influences of a dessert composed entirely of grog and pipes—the end of it being that they decided on adjourning together, after a convivial afternoon at the tavern, to the Victoria theatre. Here the master-butcher, who was benevolent to a fault in spite of the sanguinary nature of his vocation in life, insisted on paying for the whole party; but Zack took his revenge later in the evening, at supper, by generously providing oysters for three at his own expense. What happened when supper was over he was never able to remember distinctly. He had a dim recollection of going somewhere with the tripe-dresser, and of singing the tenor part in the glee of "Mynheer Van Dunk," with somebody else. But after this there occurred a hiatus in his history, which he could only resume with the next morning; when he woke up in bed at the tavern where the "ordinary" had been held, and was informed by the waiter that the faithful tripe-dresser had left him there to finish the night respectfully in an honest place.

That next morning was the beginning of an important day in Zack's life. Much depended on the interviews he was about to seek with Mr. Marksman in Kirk street, and with Mr. Blyth at the turnpike in the Laburnum road. As he paid his bill at the tavern, and started, by no means at so early an hour as he could have wished, for the distant suburb of Wendover market, his conscience was not altogether easy, when he reflected on the manner in which he had spent the past evening; and recalled the passage in his letter to his mother, which assured her that he had begun to be a reformed character already. "I'll make a clean breast of it to Blyth, and I exactly

what he tells me when I meet him at the turnpike." Fortifying himself with this good resolution, Zack arrived at Kirk street, and knocked at the private door of the tobaccoconist's shop.

Mr. Marksman, having seen him from the window, called to him to come up, as soon as the door was opened. The moment they shook hands, young Thorpe noticed that his new friend looked altered. His face seemed to have grown downcast and weary, his eyes heavy and vacant, since they had last met.

"I say, Mat, what's happened to you?" asked Zack. "You have been somewhere in the country, haven't you? And what news do you bring back, old fellow? Good, I hope."

"Bad as can be," returned Mat, gruffly. "Don't you say another word to me about it. If you do, we part company again. Talk of something else. Anything you like; and the sooner the better."

Forbidden to discourse any more concerning his friend's affairs, Zack veered about directly, and began to discourse concerning his own. Starting with a general summary of his tribulations at home, he went on to a full description of his unsuccessful attempt to steal up-stairs to bed unheard; proceeded to a minute narrative of everything he had done since leaving Baregrove square the morning before; adverted to his approaching interview with Mr. Blyth; and wound up with a copiously incoherent explanation of his own ideas about his future prospects.

Without putting a single question, or giving a single answer, without displaying externally the smallest astonishment or the slightest sympathy, Mr. Marksman stood gravely listening until Zack had quite done. He then went to the corner of the room where the round table was, pulled the up-turned lid back upon the pedestal, drew from the breast-pocket of his coat a roll of beaver-skin, slowly undid it, displayed upon the table a goodly collection of bank-notes, and pointing to them, said to young Thorpe: "Take what you want."

It was not easy to surprise Zack; but this proceeding so completely astonished him, that for the first moment or two, he stared at the bank-notes in speechless amazement. Mr. Marksman took his pipe from a nail in the wall, filled the bowl with tobacco, and pointing with the stem toward the table, repeated; "Take what you want."

This time, Zack found words in which to express himself, and used them pretty freely to praise Mat's unexampled generosity, and to decline taking a single farthing. Mr. Marksman deliberately lit his pipe, without paying the smallest attention; and then bluntly interrupted young Thorpe in these terms:—

"You may as well keep all that talking for somebody else: it's gibberish to me.



Don't bother; and take what you want. Money's what you want, though you won't own it. That's money. When it's gone, I can go back to California and get more. While it lasts, make it spin. What is there to stare at? I told you I'd be a brother to you, because of what you done for me the other night. Well: I'm being a brother to you now. Get your watch out of pawn; and then you can shake a loose leg at the world. Will you take what you want? And when you have, just tie up the rest, and chuck 'em over here." With these words, Mr. Marksman sat down on his bearskins, and sulkily surrounded himself with clouds of tobacco-smoke.

Finding it quite impossible to make him understand those delicacies and refinements of civilized life, which make one gentleman (always excepting a clergyman at Easter time) unwilling to accept money from another gentleman, as a gift—perceiving that he was beginning to lose his temper, under the infliction of remonstrances, which he seemed to receive as declarations of personal enmity and distrust—and well knowing, moreover, that a little money to go on with, would be really a very acceptable accommodation under existing circumstances, Zack consented to take two ten-pound notes, as a loan. At this reservation Mr. Marksman scoffed contemptuously; but young Thorpe enforced it, by tearing a leaf out of his pocket-book, and writing an acknowledgment for the sum he had borrowed. Mat roughly and resolutely refused to receive the document, but Zack tied it up along with the bank-notes; and threw the beaver-skin roll back to its owner, as requested.

"Do you want a bed to sleep in?" asked Mr. Marksman. "Say yes, or no, at once! I won't have no more gibberish. I ain't a gentleman, and I can't shake up along with them as are. It's no use trying it on with me, young 'un. I'm not much better than a cross between a savage and a Christian. I'm a battered, lonesome, scalped old vagabond—that's what I am! But I'm brothers with you, for all that. What's mine's yours; and if you tell me it isn't again, me and you are likely to quarrel. Do you want a bed to sleep in? Yes? or no?"

Yes; Zack certainly wanted a bed, but—

"There's one for you," said Mr. Marksman, pointing through the folding-doors into the back room. "I don't want it. I haven't slept in a bed these twenty years and more, and I can't do it now. I take dog's snoozes in this corner; and I shall take more dog snoozes out of doors in the daytime, when the sun begins to shine. I haven't been used to much sleep, and I don't want much. Go in and try if the bed's long enough for you."

Zack began to expostulate again; but Mat interrupted him directly.

"I suppose you don't care to sleep next door to such as me," said he. "You wouldn't turn your back on a bit of my blanket though, if we were out in the lonesome places together. Never mind! You won't cotton to me all at once, I dare say. Well: I cotton to *you*, in spite of that. D—n the bed! Take it, or leave it, which you like."

Zack the reckless, who was always ready at five minutes' notice to make friends with any living being under the canopy of heaven; who, only last night, had "cottoned" to a master-butcher, and a tripe-dresser—Zack the gregarious, who in his days of roaming the country before he was fettered to an office-stool, had "cottoned" to every species of rustic vagabond, from a travelling tinkler to a resident poacher—now, indignantly, and in perfect sincerity, repudiated the construction which had been placed on his unwillingness to take the offered bed; and declared warmly that he would sleep in it that very night, by way of showing himself worthy of Mat's assistance and regard, if worthy of nothing else. He was about to add that he had only hesitated at accepting the invitation, from an apprehension that he would be forbidden to pay his share toward the rent of the lodgings; but wisely suppressed this acknowledgment for the present, and resolved, at the first future opportunity, on insisting that he should be privileged to pay the expenses of the bedroom as long as he occupied it.

"There! now the bother's over at last, I suppose," said Mr. Marksman, with an air of great relief. "Pull in the buffalo-hide, and bring your legs to an anchor anywhere you like. I'm smoking. Suppose you smoke too. Hoi! Bring me a clean pipe," cried Mat in conclusion, turning up a loose corner of the carpet, and roaring through a crack in the floor into the shop below.

The pipe was brought. Zack sat down on the buffalo-hide, and began to ask his queer friend about the life he had been leading in the wilds of North and South America. From short replies at first, Mr. Marksman was gradually beguiled into really relating some of his adventures. Wild, barbarous fragments of narrative they were—mingling together, in one darkly-fantastic record, fierce triumphs and deadly dangers; miseries of cold, and hunger, and thirst; glories of hunters' feasts in mighty forests; gold-findings among desolate rocks; galloppings for life from the flames of the blazing prairie; combats with wild beasts and with men wilder still; weeks of awful solitude in primeval wastes; days and nights of perilous orgies among drunken savages; visions of meteors in heaven, of hurricanes on earth, and of icebergs blinding bright, when the sunshine was beautiful over the polar seas. These, and other topics like them,

formed the staple of Mr. Marksman's adventures, which he related in a quiet, matter-of-course manner, that added infinitely to their effect. Young Thorpe listened in a fever of excitement. Here was the desperate, dangerous, roving life of which he had dreamed! He longed already to engage in it: he could have listened to descriptions of it all day long. But Mat was the last man in the world to err, at any time, on the side of diffuseness in relating the results of his own experience. And he now provokingly stopped, on a sudden, in the middle of an adventure among the wild horses on the pampas—declaring that he was tired of hearing his own tongue wag, and had got so sick of talking of himself, that he was determined not to open his mouth again—except to put a rump-steak and a pipe in it—for the rest of the day.

Finding it impossible to make him alter this resolution, Zack thought of his engagement with Mr. Blyth, and asked what time it was. Mr. Marksman, having no watch, conveyed this inquiry into the shop by the same process of roaring through the crack in the ceiling, which he had already employed to produce a clean pipe. The answer which was given showed Zack that he had barely time enough left to be punctual to his appointment with Valentine.

"I must be off to my friend at the turnpike," said he, rising and putting on his hat; "but I shall be back again in an hour or two. And, I say, Mat, have you thought seriously yet about going back to America?" His eyes sparkled eagerly as he put this question.

"There ain't no need to think about it," answered Mr. Marksman. "I mean to go back; but I haven't settled what day yet. And I don't know when I shall settle. I've got something to do first." Here his face darkened, and he glanced aside at the box he had brought from Dibbledean, which was now covered with one of his bearskins. "Never mind what it is; I've got it to do, and that's enough. Don't you ever go asking again about whether I've brought news from the country, or whether I haven't: don't you ever do that, and then we are safe to sail along easy. I like you, Zack, when you don't bother me. There! Now, if you want to go, what are you stopping for? Why don't you clear out at once?"

Young Thorpe departed, laughing. It was a fine, clear day; and the bright sky showed signs of a return of the frost. He was in high spirits as he walked along, thinking of Mr. Marksman's wild adventures. What was the happiest painter's life, after all, compared to such a life as Mat had been leading? Zack was hardly in the Laburnum road, before he began to doubt already whether he had really made up his mind to be guided entirely by Mr.

Blyth's advice, and to devote all his energies for the future to the cultivation of the fine arts.

Near the turnpike stood a tall gentleman, making a sketch in a note-book of some felled timber lying by the roadside. This could be no other than Valentine—and Valentine it really was.

Mr. Blyth looked unusually serious, as he shook hands with young Thorpe. "Don't begin to justify yourself, Zack," said he; "I'm not going to blame you now. Let's walk on a little: I have some news to tell you from Baregrove square."

It appeared from the narrative on which Valentine now entered, that, immediately on the receipt of Zack's letter, he had called on Mr. Thorpe, with the kindly purpose of endeavoring to make peace between the father and son. His mission had entirely failed. Mr. Thorpe had grown more and more irritable as the interview proceeded; and had accused his visitor of unwarrantable interference, when Valentine suggested the propriety of holding out some prospect of forgiveness to the runaway son. This outbreak Mr. Blyth said he abstained from noticing, out of consideration for the agitated state of the speaker's feelings. But when Mr. Yollop (who had been talking with Mrs. Thorpe up-stairs) came into the room soon afterward, and joined in the conversation, such words had been spoken as obliged Valentine to leave the house. The reiteration of some arguments on the side of mercy which he had already advanced, had been viewed by Mr. Yollop and Mr. Thorpe (who supported whatever his clerical ally said) as so many evidences of the painter's own laxity of principle, and want of due sense of the sinfulness of vice. Upon this, discussion had grown warm; and, before it closed, Mr. Yollop had hinted, with an irritating affectation of extreme politeness and humility, that Mr. Blyth's profession was not of a nature to render him capable of estimating properly the nature and consequences of moral guilt; while Mr. Thorpe had referred almost openly, and with a manner which there was no mistaking, to the scandalous reports that had been spread abroad in certain quarters, years ago, on the subject of Madonna's parentage. These insinuations had roused Valentine instantly. He had denounced them as false in the strongest terms he could employ; and had left the house resolved never to hold any communication again either with Mr. Yollop or Mr. Thorpe.

About an hour after his return home, a letter marked "Private" had been brought to him from Mrs. Thorpe. The writer referred, with many expressions of sorrow, to what had occurred at the interview of the morning; and earnestly begged Mr. Blyth to take into consideration the state of Mr.



Thorpe's health, which was such that the family doctor (who had just called) had absolutely forbidden him to excite himself in the smallest degree by receiving any visitors, or by taking any active steps toward the recovery of his absent son. If these rules were not strictly complied with for many days to come, the doctor declared that the attack of palpitation of the heart, from which Mr. Thorpe had suffered on the night of Zack's return, might occur again, and be strengthened into a confirmed malady. As it was, if proper care were taken, nothing of an alarming nature need be apprehended.

Having referred to her husband in these terms, Mrs. Thorpe next reverted to herself. She mentioned the receipt of a letter from Zack; but said it had done little toward calming her anxiety and alarm. Feeling certain that Mr. Blyth would be the first friend her son would go to, she now begged him to use his influence to keep Zack from abandoning himself to any desperate courses, or from leaving the country, which she greatly feared he might be tempted to do. She asked this of Mr. Blyth, as a favor to herself; and hinted that if he would only enable her, by granting it, to tell her husband, without entering into any details, that their son was under safe guidance for the present, half the anxiety from which she was now suffering would be alleviated. Here the letter ended abruptly; a request for a speedy answer being hastily added in the postscript.

"Now, Zack," said Valentine, after he had related the result of his visit to Baregrove square, and had faithfully reported the contents of Mrs. Thorpe's letter, "I shall only add that whatever has happened between your father and me, makes no difference in the respect I have always felt for your mother, and in my earnest desire to do her every service in my power. I tell you fairly—as between friends—that I think you have been very much to blame, and very—well! I won't say the next word; but I will say this instead, that I have sufficient confidence and faith in you, to leave everything to be now decided by your own sense of honor, and by the affection which I am sure you feel for your mother."

This appeal, and the narrative which had preceded it, had their due effect on Zack. His ardor for a wandering life of excitement and peril began to cool in the quiet temperature of the good influences that were now at work within him. "It sha'n't be my fault, Blyth, if I don't deserve your good opinion," said he, warmly. "I know I've behaved bad; and I know, too, that I have had some severe provocations. But never mind that: it's no use ripping open what's past, now. Only tell me what you advise, and I'll do it—I will, upon my honor, for my mother's sake."

"That's right! that's talking like a man," exclaimed Valentine, clapping him on the shoulder. "Now, look here, this is what I have to recommend: in the first place, it would be no use your going back home at once—even if you were willing, which I am afraid you are not. In the state your father seems to be in now, your presence in Baregrove square would do *him* a great deal of harm, and do *you* no good. Employed, however, you must be somehow, while you're away from home; and what you're fit for—unless it's art—I'm sure I don't know. You have been talking a great deal about wanting to be a painter; and now is the time to test your resolution. If I get you an order to draw in the British Museum, to fill up your mornings; and if I enter you at some private academy, to fill up your evenings (mine at home is not half strict enough for you)—will you stick to it? No toasting muffins and talking nonsense now, you know. Real, serious, steady, hard work, which I will undertake to help you through if you will only engage to exert yourself. I can propose no better plan for the present than this. Do you consent to follow it?"

"Yes, to the letter," replied Zack, resolutely dismissing his dreams of life in the wilds to the limbo of oblivion. "I ask nothing better, Blyth, than to stick to you and your plan for the future."

"Bravo!" cried Valentine, in his old, gay, hearty manner. "The heaviest load of anxiety that has been on my shoulders for some time past, is off them now. Shake hands once more, Zack. I will write and comfort your mother this very afternoon—"

"Give her my love," interposed Zack.

"—Giving her your love; in the belief of course, that you are going to prove yourself worthy to send such a message," continued Mr. Blyth. "Let's turn and walk back at once. The sooner I write, the easier and happier I shall be. By-the-by, there's another important question starts up now, which I had not thought of before; and which your mother seems to have forgotten in the hurry and agitation of writing her letter. What are you going to do about money matters? Have you thought about a place to live in for the present? Can I help you in any way?"

These questions admitted of but one candid form of answer, which the natural frankness of Zack's character led him to adopt without hesitation. He immediately related the whole history of his first meeting with Mr. Matthew Marksman, and of the visit to Kirk street which had followed it that very morning.

Though in no way remarkable for excess of caution, or for the possession of any extraordinary fund of worldly wisdom, Mr. Blyth frowned and shook his head suspiciously, while he listened to the curious nar-

rative now addressed to him. As soon as it was concluded, he expressed the most decided disapprobation of the careless readiness with which Zack had allowed a perfect stranger to become intimate with him—reminded him that he had met his new acquaintance (of whom, by his own confession, he knew next to nothing) in a very disreputable place; and concluded by earnestly recommending him to break off all connection with so dangerous an associate, at the earliest possible opportunity.

Zack, on his side, was not slow in mustering arguments to defend his conduct. He stated that Mr. Marksman had gone into the Temple of Harmony innocently, as a stranger ignorant of the real character of the place; and had been grossly insulted before he became the originator of the riot there. As to his family affairs and his real name, he might have good and proper reasons for concealing them; and this was the more probable, inasmuch as his account of himself in other respects was straightforward and unreserved enough. He might be very eccentric, and might have led an adventurous life; but it was surely not fair to condemn him on that account only, as a downright bad character. In conclusion, Zack cited the loan he had received, as a proof that the stranger could not be a swindler, at any rate; and referred to the evident familiarity with localities and customs in California, which he had shown in conversation that afternoon, as affording satisfactory evidence in corroboration of his own statement that he had gained his money by gold-digging.

Mr. Blyth admitted that there might be some force in these arguments, but nevertheless held firmly to his original opinion; and, first offering to advance the money from his own purse, suggested that young Thorpe should relieve himself of the obligation which he had imprudently contracted, by paying back what he had borrowed, that very afternoon.

Zack replied, that, if he followed this advice, and so openly avowed the most complete distrust of his new friend, he had not the least doubt in the world that Mr. Marksman was of a temper to knock him down the moment he offered the money back; adding, in conclusion: "And, let me tell you, Blyth, he's one of the few men alive who could really do it."

Valentine shook his head; and said this was no joking matter.

Zack declared he was quite in earnest, and proceeded to illustrate the peculiarities of Mr. Marksman's character by relating a few of his friend's wildest adventures at second hand. From these he next diverged to Mat's rough kindness in placing all his bank-notes, and his bed after that, at his visitor's disposal; laying great stress, while

relating these circumstances, on his refusal to accept any acknowledgment for the money he had lent. "I only succeeded in forcing it on him unawares," concluded young Thorpe, "by slipping it in among his bank-notes; and, if he finds it there, I'll lay you any wager he tears it up, or throws it into the fire."

Mr. Blyth hesitated, and began to look a little puzzled. The suspicious stranger's behavior about the money was rather staggering, to say the least of it.

"Let me bring him to your picture-show," pursued Zack. "Judge of him yourself, before you condemn him. He's the queerest and best fellow in the world: look at him and hear him talk; and then, if you tell me to break with him, I will. Surely I can't say fairer than that.—May I bring him to see the pictures? I mentioned it in my letter, didn't I?"

"Before I answer," said Valentine, "just think again, whether it wouldn't really be better to risk offending this man, and to follow my advice."

"I should be ashamed to offend him," answered Zack. "Upon my honor, after what has passed between us, I should be ashamed to treat him as you tell me."

"Then, Zack, it seems certainly necessary—as I am in a manner answerable for you to your mother, now—that I should see this new associate of yours as soon as possible."

"Will you come at once to Kirk street, where he lives?"

"I must write my letter to your mother before I do anything else. And then I expect Lavvie's father to come early, and drink tea with us. I might slip away, to be sure; but the poor old gentleman would think me neglectful if I left him."

"What do you say to to-morrow, then? To-morrow's Friday, you know."

"Friday's unluckily out of the question. I have a retouching job to do on an old picture, down in the country. It's at a friend's house; so I shall have to dine there, and shan't get back till the night train. No: it can't be done to-morrow."

"And the next day is the day of your picture-show."

"Well, Zack, all things considered, you had better bring him to it as you proposed just now. But remember the distinction I always make between my public studio and my private house. I consider the glorious mission of art to apply to everybody; so I am proud to open my painting-room to any honest man who wants to look at my pictures. But the freedom of my other rooms is only for my own friends. I can't have strangers I know nothing about brought up-stairs: remember that."

"Of course! I shouldn't think of it, my dear fellow. Only you look at honest old



Mat, and hear him; and I'll answer for the rest."

"Zack! Zack! I wish you were not so dreadfully careless about whom you get acquainted with. I have often warned you that you risk bringing yourself or your friends into trouble some day, when you least expect it. Where are you going to now?"

"Back to Kirk street. This is my nearest way; and I promised Mat—"

"Remember what you have promised me, and what I am going to promise your mother. Wait a moment; I have something more to say. What about to-morrow? I shan't be able to get you the order for the museum by that time. How do you mean to employ the day?"

"In taking a good, long, healthy, glorious stretch into the country with Mat, who likes a tough walk as well as any man that ever trod on shoe-leather. Good-by, dear old boy; and thank you for all you're going to do for me. I remember, and mean to keep, on my honor, every promise I have made to you. Only wait till we meet on Saturday, and you see my new friend; and you will find it all right."

"I hope I shan't find it all wrong," said Mr. Blyth, to himself forebodingly, as he followed the road to his own house.

## CHAPTER V.

### THE PICTURE-SHOW.

THE great day of the year in Valentine's house, was always the day on which his pictures for the royal academy exhibition were shown in their completed state to friends and admiring spectators, congregated in his own painting-room. By dint of issuing invitations right and left, in all directions—on the liberal principle that anybody was welcome to his studio, without distinction of class, who wanted to look at his pictures, or who would feel complimented by being invited to see them—he invariably contrived to insure a large attendance of company, in spite of the humble position which he held in his profession. His visitors represented almost every variety of rank in the social scale; and grew numerous in proportion as they descended from the higher to the lower degrees. Thus, the aristocracy of race was usually impersonated, in his painting-room, by his one noble patron, the Dowager Countess of Brambledown; the aristocracy of art by two or three royal academicians; and the aristocracy of money by eight or ten highly respectable families, who came quite as much to look at the dowager countess as to look at the pictures. With these last, the select

portion of the company might be said to terminate; and, after them, flowed in promiscuously the general mass, and great obscure majority of the visitors—a heterogeneous and blindly-admiring mob of minor people—a congregation of worshippers at the shrine of art, who were some of them of small importance, some of doubtful importance, some of no importance at all; and who included within their numbers, not only a sprinkling of Mr. Blyth's old-established tradesmen, but also his gardener, his wife's old nurse, the brother of his housemaid, and the father of his cook. Some of his respectable friends deplored, on principle, the "levelling tendencies" which induced him thus to admit a mixture of all classes into his painting-room, on the days when he exhibited his pictures. But Valentine persisted, nevertheless, year after year, in choosing his visitors from the low degree as well as the high; and was warmly encouraged in taking this course by no less a person than Lady Brambledown herself, who had once been a violent tory, but was now an uncompromising radical, a taker of snuff, a reviler of the peerage, a teller of scandalous royal anecdotes, and a worshipper of the memory of Oliver Cromwell.

On the eventful Saturday which was to display his works to an applauding public of private friends, Mr. Blyth had dressed himself in his gayest morning costume, and had entered his painting-room, to be ready to receive the visitors, a good half-hour before the most punctual people could possibly be expected to arrive. Thanks to Madonna's industry and attention, the studio looked really in perfect order—as neat and clean as a room could be. A semicircle of all the available chairs in the house—drawing-room and bedroom chairs intermingled—ranged itself symmetrically in front of the pictures. That imaginative classical landscape, "The Golden Age," reposed grandly on its own easel; while "Columbus in Sight of the New World"—the largest canvass Mr. Blyth had ever worked on, encased in the most gorgeous frame he had ever ordered for one of his own pictures—was hung on the wall at an easy distance from the ground, having proved too bulky to be safely accommodated by any easel in Valentine's possession.

Except Mr. Blyth's bureau, all the ordinary furniture and general litter of the room had been cleared out of it, or hidden away behind some draperies, flowing picturesquely-pendulous and slightly damaged by old paint-stains, over the lumber in one corner, which it had been found impossible to remove. Every other portion of the studio was perfectly clear from end to end; and backward and forward over the open space thus obtained, Mr. Blyth walked expectant,

with the elastic skip peculiar to him; looking ecstatically at his pictures, as he passed and repassed them—now singing, now whistling; sometimes referring mysteriously to a small manuscript which he carried in his hand, jauntily tied round with blue ribbon; sometimes following the lines of the composition in “Columbus,” by flourishing his mahl-stick before it in the air, with dreamy artistic grace; always, turn where he would, instinct from top to toe with an excitable activity which defied the very idea of rest; and always hospitably ready to rush to the door and receive the first enthusiastic visitor with open arms, at a moment’s notice.

Above stairs, in “Lavvie’s drawing-room,” the scene was of a different kind. Here also the arrival of the expected visitors was an event of importance: but it was awaited in perfect tranquillity and silence. Mrs. Blyth lay in her usual position on the couch side of the bed, turning over a small portfolio of engravings; and Madonna stood at the front window, where she could command a full view of the garden-gate, and of the approach from it to the house. This was always her place on the days when the pictures were shown; for, while occupying this position, she was able, by signs, to indicate the arrival of the different guests to her adopted mother, who lay too far from the window to see them. On all other days of the year, it was Mrs. Blyth who devoted herself to Madonna’s service, by interpreting for her advantage the pleasant conversations that she could not hear. On this day, it was Madonna who devoted herself to Mrs. Blyth’s service, by identifying for her amusement the visitors whose approach up the garden-walk she could not safely leave her bed to see.

No privilege that the girl enjoyed under Valentine’s roof was more valued by her than this, for by the exercise of it, she was enabled to make some slight return in kind for the affectionate attention of which she was the constant object. Mrs. Blyth always encouraged her to indicate who the different guests were, as they followed each other, by signs of her own choosing, that were almost invariably suggested by some habitual gesture, or other characteristic peculiarity of the person represented, which her quick observation had detected at a first interview, and which she copied with the quaintest exactness of imitation. The correctness with which her memory preserved these signs, and retained, after long intervals, the recollection of the persons to whom they alluded, was very extraordinary. The name of any mere acquaintance, who came seldom to the house, she constantly forgot, having only perhaps had it interpreted to her once or twice, and not hearing it as others did, whenever it accidentally occurred in con-

versation. But if the sign by which she herself had once designated that acquaintance—no matter how long ago—happened to be repeated by those about her, it was then always found that the forgotten person was recalled to her recollection immediately.

From eleven till three had been notified in the invitation-cards as the time during which the pictures would be on view. It was now long past ten. Madonna still stood patiently by the window, going on with a new purse which she was knitting for Valentine; and looking out attentively now and then toward the road. Mrs. Blyth, humming a tune to herself, slowly turned over the engravings of her portfolio, and became so thoroughly absorbed in looking at them, that she forgot altogether how time was passing, and was quite astonished to hear Madonna suddenly clap her hands at the window, as a signal that the first punctual visitor had passed the garden-gate.

Mrs. Blyth raised her eyes from the prints directly, and smiled as she saw the girl puckering up her fresh, rosy face into a childish imitation of old age, bending her light figure gravely in a succession of formal bows, and kissing her hand several times with extreme suavity and deliberation. These signs were meant to indicate the poor engraver, whose old-fashioned habit it was to pay homage to all his friends among the ladies, by saluting them from afar off with tremulous bows and gallant kissings of the hand.

“Ah!” thought Mrs. Blyth, nodding, to show that she understood the signs. “Ah! there’s father. I felt sure he would be the first; and I know exactly what he will do when he gets in. He will admire the pictures more than anybody, and have a better opinion to give of them than anybody else has; but before he can mention a word of it to Valentine, there will be dozens of people in the painting-room, and then he will get taken suddenly nervous, and come up here to me.”

While Mrs. Blyth was thinking about her father, Madonna signalized the advent of two more visitors. First, she raised her hand sharply, and began pulling at an imaginary whisker on her own smooth cheek—then stood bolt upright, and folded her arms majestically over her bosom. Mrs. Blyth immediately recognised the originals of these two pantomime portrait-sketches. The one represented Mr. Hemlock, a small critic of a small newspaper, who was principally remarkable for never letting his whiskers alone for five minutes together. The other portrayed Mr. Bullivant, the aspiring fair-haired sculptor, who wrote poetry, and studied dignity in his attitudes so unremittingly, that he could not even stop to look in at a shop-window, without



standing before it as if he was his own statue.

In a minute or two more, Mrs. Blyth heard a prodigious grating of wheels, and trampling of horses, and banging of carriage-steps violently let down. Madonna immediately took a seat on the nearest chair, rolled the skirt of her dress up into her lap, tucked both her hands inside it, then drew out one, and imitated the action of snuff-taking—looking up merrily at Mrs. Blyth, as much as to say, "You can't mistake that, I think?" Impossible! old Lady Brambledown, with her muff and snuff-box, to the very life.

Close on the dowager countess followed a visitor of low degree. Madonna—looking as if she was a little afraid of the boldness of her own imitation—began chewing an imaginary quid of tobacco; then pretended to pull it suddenly out of her mouth, and throw it away behind her. It was all over in a moment; but it represented to perfection Mangles, the gardener; who, though an inveterate chewer of tobacco, always threw away his quid whenever he confronted his betters, as a duty that he owed to his own respectability.

Another carriage. Madonna put on a supposititious pair of spectacles, pretended to pull them off, rub them bright, and put them on again; then, retiring a little from the window, spread out her dress into the widest dimensions that it could be made to assume. The new arrivals thus portrayed, were the doctor, whose glasses were never clean enough to please him; and the doctor's wife, an emaciated fine lady, who deceitfully suggested the presence of vanished charms, by wearing a balloon under her gown—which benevolent female rumor pronounced to be only a crinoline petticoat.

Here there was a brief pause in the procession of visitors. Mrs. Blyth beckoned to Madonna, and began talking on her fingers.

"No signs of Zack yet—are there, love?"

The girl looked anxiously toward the window, and shook her head.

"If he ventures up here, when he does come, we must not be so kind to him as usual. He has been behaving himself very badly, and we must see if we can't make him ashamed of himself."

Madonna's color rose directly. She looked amazed, sorry, perplexed, and incredulous by turns. Zack behaving badly? she would never believe it!

"I shall try if I can't give it to him!" pursued Mrs. Blyth.

"And I shall try if I can't console him afterward," thought Madonna, turning away her head for fear her face should betray her.

Here there was another ring at the bell. "There he is, perhaps," continued Mrs. Blyth, nodding in the direction of the window, as she signed these words.

Madonna ran to look: then turned round, and, with a comic air of disappointment, hooked her thumbs in the arm-holes of an imaginary waistcoat. Only Mr. Gimble, the picture-dealer, who always criticised works of art with his hands in that position.

Just then, a soft knock sounded at Mrs. Blyth's door; and her father entered, sniffing with that perpetual cold of his which nothing could cure—bowing, kissing his hand, and frightened up-stairs by the company, just as his daughter had predicted.

"Oh, Lavvie! the dowager countess is down-stairs, and her ladyship likes the pictures," exclaimed the old man, snuffing and smiling in an infirm flutter of nervous glee.

"Come and sit down by me, father, and see Madonna doing the visitors. It's funnier than any play that ever was acted."

"And her ladyship likes the pictures," repeated the engraver, his poor, old, watery eyes almost sparkling with pleasure as he told his little morsel of good news over again, and sat down by the bedside of his favorite child.

The rings at the bell began to multiply at compound interest. Madonna was hardly still at the window for a moment, so many were the visitors whose approach up the garden-walk it was now necessary for her to signalize. Down-stairs, all the vacant seats left in the painting-room were filling rapidly; and the ranks of standers in the back places were getting two-deep already.

There was Lady Brambledown (whose calls at the studio always lasted the whole morning), sitting in the centre, or place of honor, taking snuff fiercely, talking liberal sentiments in a cracked voice, and apparently feeling extreme pleasure in making the respectable families stare at her in reverent amazement. There were two royal academicians—a saturnine academician, swaddled in a voluminous cloak, who stared at the pictures with a speechless pertinacity which quietly annihilated them as works of art—and a benevolent academician with an umbrella, who, not being able conscientiously to praise either "Columbus" or "The Golden Age," and being a great deal too fond of Valentine to blame them, compromised the matter by waving his hand vaguely before the pictures, and saying from time to time: "Yes, yes; ah! yes, yes, yes." There were the doctor and his wife, who admired the massive frame of "Columbus," but said not a word about the picture itself. There were M. Bullivant, the sculptor, and Mr. Hemlock, the journalist, exchanging solemnly that sort of critical small talk, in which such words as "sensual," "esthetic," "objective," and "subjective," occupy prominent places, and out of which no man ever has succeeded, or ever will succeed, in extricating an idea. There was

Mr. Gimble, fluently laudatory, with the whole alphabet of art-jargon at his fingers' ends, but with not the slightest vestige of comprehension of the subject, in either theory or practice. There were some respectable families who tried to understand the pictures, and could not. There were other respectable families who never tried at all, but confined themselves exclusively to the dowager countess. There were the obscure general visitors, who more than made up in enthusiasm what they wanted in distinction. And, finally, there was the absolute democracy, or downright low-life party among the spectators, represented for the time being by Mr. Blyth's gardener and Mr. Blyth's cook's father, who, standing together modestly outside the door, agreed in awestruck whispers that "The Golden Age" was "a tasty thing," and "Columbus in Sight of the New World" a "beautiful piece."

All Valentine's restlessness before the visitors arrived was as nothing compared with his rapturous activity now that they were fairly assembled. Not once had he stood still or ceased talking since the first spectator entered the room. And not once, probably, would he have permitted either his legs or his tongue to take the slightest repose until the last guest had departed from the studio, but for Lady Brambledown, who accidentally hit on the only available means of fixing his attention to one thing, and keeping him comparatively quiet in one place.

"I say, Blyth," cried her ladyship (she never prefixed the word "Mister" to the names of any of her male friends)—"I say, Blyth, I can't for the life of me understand your picture of Columbus yet. You talked some time ago about explaining it in detail. When are you going to begin?"

"Directly, my dear madam, directly: I was only waiting till the next room got well filled," answered Valentine, taking up his mahl-stick, and producing the manuscript tied round with blue riband. "The fact is—I don't know whether you mind it?—I have just thrown together a few thoughts on art, as a sort of introduction to—Columbus, in short; which, I feel, wants more explaining than my pictures usually do. They are written down on this paper—the thoughts are. Would anybody be kind enough to read them, while I point out what they mean on the picture? I only ask, because it seems egotistical somehow to be reading my opinions about my own works. Will anybody be kind enough?"

Repeated Mr. Blyth, walking all along the semicircle of chairs, and politely offering his manuscript to anybody who would take it.

Not a hand was held out. Bashfulness is sometimes infectious, and it proved to be so on this particular occasion.

"Nonsense, Blyth!" exclaimed Lady

Brambledown. "Read it yourself. Egotistical? Stuff! Everybody's egotistical. I hate modest men; they're all rascals. Read it, and assert your own importance. You have a better right to do so than most of your neighbors, for you belong to the aristocracy of talent—the only aristocracy, in my opinion, worth a straw." Here her ladyship took a pinch of snuff, and looked at the respectable families, as much as to say "There! what do you think of that from a dowager countess?"

Thus encouraged, Valentine took his station beneath "Columbus," and unrolled the manuscript.

"What a very peculiar man Mr. Blyth is!" whispered one of the lady-visitors to an acquaintance behind her.

"And what a very unusual mixture of people he seems to have asked!" rejoined the other, looking toward the doorway, where the democracy loomed diffident in Sunday-clothes.

"The pictures which I have the honor to exhibit," began Valentine from the manuscript, "have been painted on a principle—"

"I beg your pardon, Blyth," interrupted Lady Brambledown, whose sharp ears had caught the remark made on Valentine and his "mixture of people," and whose liberal principles were thereby instantly stimulated into publicly asserting themselves—"I beg your pardon; but where's my old ally, the gardener, who was here last time?—Out at the door, is he? What does he mean by not coming in? Here, gardener! come behind my chair." (The gardener approached, internally writhing under the honor of public notice, and covered with confusion in consequence of the noise his boots made on the floor.) "How do you do? and how are your family? What did you stop out at the door for? You're one of Mr. Blyth's guests, and have as much right inside as any of the rest of us. Stand there, and listen, and look about you, and inform your mind. This is an age of progress, gardener; your class is coming uppermost, and time it did too. Go on, Blyth." And again the dowager countess took a pinch of snuff, looking disparagingly at the lady who had spoken of the "mixture of people."

"—have been painted on a principle," continued Valentine, "which may be briefly explained thus: I take the liberty of dividing all art into two great classes, the landscape subjects and the figure subjects; and I venture to describe these classes, in their highest development, under the respective titles of art pastoral and art mystic. The 'Golden Age' is an attempt to exemplify art pastoral. 'Columbus in Sight of the New World' is an effort to express myself in art mystic. In landscape" (everybody looked at the "Golden Age"), "art pasto-



ral is only, I think, to be attained by taking Nature merely as a foundation, and building up upon it an airy ideal, which shall elevate the mind, and diffuse sublime poetry and philosophy over laborious reality, which can not be said to diffuse anything out itself. As an instance, in the picture now favored by your notice" (Mr. Blyth waved his mahl-stick persuasively toward the "Golden Age")—"you have in the foreground-bushes, the middle-distance trees, the horizon-mountains, and the superincumbent sky, what I would fain hope is a tolerably faithful transcript of mere Nature. But in the group of buildings to the right" (here the cane touched the architectural city, with its acres of steps and forests of pillars), "in the dancing nymphs, and the musing philosopher" (Mr. Blyth rapped that sage briskly on the head with the padded end of his mahl-stick), "you have the ideal—the elevating poetical view of ordinary things, like cities, happy female peasants, and thoughtful spectators. Thus Nature is exalted; and thus the diffusion to which I have briefly alluded takes place." Here Valentine paused at the end of a paragraph; and the gardener made an abortive effort to get back to the doorway.

"Capital, Blyth!" cried Lady Brambledown—"liberal, comprehensive, progressive, profound. Gardener, don't fidget!"

"The true philosophy of art—the true philosophy of art, my lady," added Mr. Gimble, the picture-dealer.

"Crude?" said Mr. Hemlock, the critic, appealing confidentially to Mr. Bullivant, the sculptor.

"What?" inquired that gentleman.

"Blyth's principles of criticism," answered Mr. Hemlock.

"Oh, yes! extremely so," said Mr. Bullivant.

"Having glanced at art pastoral, as attempted in the 'Golden Age,'" pursued Valentine, turning over a leaf, "I will now, with your permission, proceed to art mystic and 'Columbus.' Art mystic, I would briefly endeavor to define, as aiming at the illustration of fact on the highest imaginative principles. It takes a scene, for instance, from history—sacred or profane, no matter which—and represents that scene as exactly and naturally as possible. And here the ordinary thinker might be apt to say, 'Art mystic has done enough.'" ("So it has," muttered Mr. Hemlock.) "On the contrary, art mystic has only begun. Besides the representation of the scene itself, the spirit of the age"—("Ah! quite right," said Lady Brambledown; "yes, yes, the spirit of the age")—"the spirit of the age which produced that scene, and the prophetic foreshortening—I beg your pardon, I mean foreshadowing—prophetic foreshadowing of future periods, must also be indicated, mysti-

cally, by the introduction of those angelic or infernal winged forms—those cherubs and airy female genies, those demons and dragons of darkness—which so many illustrious painters have long since taught us to recognise as impersonating to the eye the good and evil influences—virtue and vice, glory and shame, success and failure, past and future, heaven and earth—all on the same canvass." Here, Mr. Blyth stopped again: this passage had cost him some trouble, and he was secretly proud of it.

"Glorious!" cried enthusiastic Mr. Gimble.

"Turgid," muttered critical Mr. Hemlock.

"Very," assented compliant Mr. Bullivant.

"Go on—get to the picture—don't stop so often," said Lady Brambledown. "Bless my soul, how the man *does* fidget!" This was not directed at Valentine (who, however, richly deserved it), but at the unhappy gardener, who had made a second attempt to escape to the sheltering obscurity of the doorway, and had been betrayed by his boots.

"To exemplify what has just been remarked, by the picture at my side," proceeded Mr. Blyth. "The moment sought to be represented is sunrise on the 12th of October, 1492, when the great Columbus first saw land clearly at the end of his voyage. Observe now, in the upper portions of the composition, how the mystical illustration of the spirit of the age, and the symbolical prophecy of future events, to which I have referred, are developed before the spectator. Of the two winged female figures hovering in the morning clouds, immediately over Columbus and his ship, the one is the spirit of discovery, holding the orb of the world in her left hand, and pointing with a laurel crown (typical of Columbus's fame) in her right hand, toward the newly-discovered continent. The other figure symbolizes the spirit of royal patronage, impersonated by being a portrait of Queen Isabella, Columbus's warm friend and patron, who offered her jewels to pay his expenses, and who, throughout his perilous voyage, was with him in spirit as here represented. The tawny figure with feathered head, floating hair, and wildly-extended pinions, soaring upward from the western horizon, represents the genius of America advancing to meet her great discoverer; while the shadowy countenances, looming dimly through the morning mist behind her, are portrait-types of Washington and Franklin, the patriot preservers of America, who would never have been given to it if that continent had not been discovered, and who are here, therefore, associated prophetically with the first voyagers from the Old World to the New."

Pausing once more Mr. Blyth used his explanatory mahl-stick freely on the persons of the spirit of discovery, the spirit of royal patronage, and the genius of America—not forgetting an indicative knock a piece for the embryo physiognomies of Washington and Franklin. Everybody's eyes followed the progress of the stick vacantly; and everybody's opinion was that art mystic, as impersonated on Mr. Blyth's canvass, must be a very tremendous intellectual job—always, however, excepting Mr. Hemlock, who frowned, and whispered—"Bosh!" to Mr. Bullivant; who smiled, and whispered—"Quite so," to Mr. Hemlock.

"Let me now ask your attention," resumed Valentine, "to the same mystic style of treatment, as carried from the sky into the sea. Writhing defeated behind Columbus's ship, in the depths of the transparent Atlantic, you have shadowy types of the difficulties and enemies that the dauntless navigator had to contend with. Crushed headlong into the waters, sinks first the spirit of superstition, delineated by monastic robes—the council of monks having set itself against Columbus from the very first. Behind the spirit of superstition, and impersonated by a fillet of purple grapes around her head, descends the genius of Portugal—the Portuguese having repulsed Columbus, and having treacherously sent out frigates to stop his discovery by taking him prisoner. The scaly forms entwined around these two, represent Envy, Hatred, Malice, Ignorance, and Crime generally; and thus the mystic element is, so to speak, led through the sea out of the picture."

(Another pause: everybody appearing to be unaccountably relieved by this announcement of the final departure of the mystic element.)

"All that now remains to be noticed," continued Mr. Blyth, "is the central portion of the composition, which is occupied by Columbus and his ships, and which represents the scene as it may actually be supposed to have occurred. Here we get to reality, and to that sort of correctly-imitative art which is simple enough to explain itself. As a proof of this, let me point attention to the rig of the ships, the actions of the sailors, and, more than all, Columbus himself. There he stands stretching out his arms rapturously on the high stern of his vessel. His cloak has fallen from his shoulders, and has left his trunk, or 'torso,' clothed only in a tight-fitting chamois leather jerkin, rusty with age, which I have adopted as indicative of the poverty of his circumstances at that period. It may not perhaps appear at first sight, that weeks of the most laborious consultation of authorities of which the artist is capable, have been expended over the im-

personation of that one figure. Yet so it has been; for so only can be obtained that faithful representation of individual character, which it is my earnest desire to combine with the higher or mystic element. One instance of this fidelity to nature I may perhaps be permitted to point out in the person of Columbus, in conclusion. First, however, let me remind you that this great man went to sea at the age of fourteen, and cast himself freely into all the hardships of nautical life; next, let me beg you to enter into my train of thought, and consider these hardships as naturally comprising among other things, industrious haulings at ropes and manful tuggings at long oars, and, finally, let me now direct your attention to the manner in which the muscular system of the famous navigator is developed about the arms in anatomical harmony with this idea. Follow my mahl-stick closely, and observe the rotund vigor of years of athletic exertion, expressed in Columbus's *biceps flexor cubiti*—"

"Mercy on us! what's a *biceps*?" cried Lady Brambledown.

"The *biceps flexor cubiti*, your ladyship," began the doctor, delighted to pour professional information into the mind of a dowager countess, "may be literally interpreted as the two-headed bender of the elbow, and is a muscle situated on, what we term, the os—"

"Follow the mahl-stick, my dear madam, pray follow the mahl-stick! This is the *biceps*," interrupted Valentine; tapping till the canvass quivered again, on the upper part of Columbus's arms, which appeared to be in a sadly swollen condition under their tight-fitting chamois leather sleeves. "The *biceps*, Lady Brambledown, is a tremendously strong muscle—"

"Which arises in the human body, your ladyship," interposed the doctor, "by two heads—"

"Which is used," continued Valentine, cutting him short—"I beg your pardon, doctor, but this is important—which is used—"

"I beg yours," rejoined the doctor, testily. "The origin of the muscle, or place where it arises, is the first thing to be described. The use comes afterward. It is an axiom of anatomical science—"

"But, my dear sir!" cried Valentine—

"No," said the doctor, peremptorily; "you must really excuse me. This is a professional point. If I allow erroneous explanations of the muscular system to pass unchecked in my presence—"

"I don't want to make any!" cried Mr. Blyth, gesticulating violently in the direction of Columbus. "I only want to—"

"To describe the use of a muscle before you describe the place of its origin in the human body," persisted the doctor.—"No,



my dear sir! I can't sanction it. No, indeed! I really *can* not sanction it!"

"Will you let me say two words?" asked Valentine.

"Two hundred thousand, my good sir, on any other subject," assented the doctor, with a sarcastic smile; "but on *this* subject—"

"On art?" shouted Mr. Blyth, with a rap on Columbus, which struck a sound from the canvass like a thump on a muffled drum. "On art, doctor? I only want to say, that as Columbus's early life must have exercised him considerably in hauling ropes and pulling oars, I have shown the large development of his *biceps* muscle (which is principally used in those actions) through his sleeves, as a good characteristic point to insist on in his physical formation.—That's all! As to the origin—"

"The origin of the *biceps flexor cubiti*, your ladyship," resumed the pertinacious doctor, "is by two heads. The first begins, if I may so express myself, *tendinous*—"

"That man is a pedantic jackass," whispered Mr. Hemlock to his friend.

"And yet he hasn't a bad head for a bust!" rejoined Mr. Bullivant.

"—*Tendinous*, your ladyship," continued the doctor, "from the glenoid cavity of the scapula; the scapula signifying—"

"Pray, Mr. Blyth," said the polite and ever-admiring Mr. Gimble—"pray let me beg you, in the name of the company, to proceed with your most interesting and suggestive explanations and views on art!"

"—*Signifying*, or meaning, the under part of the shoulder, your ladyship," proceeded the doctor, "or shoulder-blade. And the glenoid cavity being in point of fact—"

"Indeed, Mr. Gimble," said Valentine, "I am very much delighted and gratified by your approval; but I have nothing more to read. I thought that little point about Columbus a good point to leave off with; and considered that I might safely allow the rest of the picture to explain itself to the intelligent spectator."

Hearing this, some of the spectators, possibly distrusting their own intelligence, rose to take leave—new visitors making their appearance, however, to fill the vacant chairs and receive Mr. Blyth's hearty welcome. Meanwhile, through all the bustle of departing and arriving friends, and through all the fast-strengthening hum of general talk, the voice of the unyielding doctor still murmured solemnly of "capsular ligaments," "adjacent tendons," and "coracoid processes," to Lady Brambledown—who listened to him with satirical curiosity, as a species of polite medical buffoon that it rather amused her to become acquainted with.

Among the guests whom Valentine now advanced to receive at his painting-room

door, were two whom he had expected to see at a much earlier period of the day—Mr. Marksman and Zack.

"How late you are!" said he, as he shook hands with young Thorpe.

"I wish I could have come earlier, my dear fellow," answered Zack, rather importantly; "but I had some business to do" (he had been taking his watch out of pawn); "and my friend here had some business to do so also" (Mr. Marksman had been toasting red herrings for an early dinner); "and so somehow we couldn't get here before Mat, let me introduce you. This is my old friend, Mr. Blyth, whom I told you of."

Valentine had barely time to take the hand Mr. Marksman held out to him, and say something polite, before his attention was claimed by fresh visitors. Young Thorpe did the honors of the house, and took his new associate into the painting-room. "Lots of people, as I told you; my friend's a great artist," whispered Zack—wondering, as he spoke, whether the peculiar scene of civilized life now displayed before Mr. Marksman would at all tend to upset his barbarian self-possession.

No, not in the least. There stood Mat, just as grave, cool, and quietly observant of things about him, as ever. Neither the pictures, nor the company, nor the staring of many eyes that wondered at his black skull-cap and scarred, swarthy face, were capable of disturbing the Olympian serenity of this Jupiter of the backwoods.

"There!" said Zack, pointing triumphantly across the room to "Columbus"—"what do you think of that? Can you guess what that is a picture of—eh, Mat?"

Mr. Marksman attentively and deliberately surveyed the figure of Columbus, the rig of his ship, and the wings of the typical female spirits, hovering overhead in the morning clouds—thought a little—then answered, in a grave and low voice:—

"Peter Wilkins, taking a voyage along with his flying wives."

Zack pulled out his handkerchief, and stifled his laughter as well as he could, out of consideration for Mat; who, however, took not the smallest notice of him, but added, still staring intently at the picture:—

"Peter Wilkins was the only book I had when I was a lad aboard ship. I used to read it over and over again, at odds and ends of spare time, till I pretty nigh got it by heart. That was many a year ago; and a good lot of what I knowed then, I don't know now. But, mind ye, it's my belief that Peter Wilkins was something of a sailor."

"Well," whispered Zack, humoring him for the fun of the thing, "suppose he was, what of that?"

"Do you think a man as was anything of a sailor would ever be fool enough to put to sea in such a craft as that?" asked Mr.

Marksman, pointing scornfully to Columbus's ship.

"Hush, old Rough and Tough! the picture hasn't anything to do with Peter Wilkins," said Zack. "Keep quiet, and wait here a minute for me. There are some friends of mine at the other end of the room, that I must go and speak to. And, I say, Mat, if Blyth comes up to you and asks you about the picture, say it's Columbus, and devilish like him."

Left by himself, Mr. Marksman looked about him for better standing-room than he then happened to occupy; and seeing a vacant space left between the door-post and Mr. Blyth's bureau, retreated to it. Putting his hands in his pockets, he leaned comfortably against the wall, and began to examine the room and everything in it, at his leisure. It was not long, however, before he was disturbed. One of his neighbors, seeing that his back was against a large paper sketch nailed on the wall behind him, told him bluntly that he was doing mischief there, and made him change his position. He moved accordingly to the door-post; but even here he was not left in repose. A fresh relay of visitors arrived, and obliged him to make way for them to pass into the room—which he did by politely rolling himself round the door-post into the passage.

As he disappeared in this way, Mr. Blyth bustled up to the place where he had been standing and received his guests there with great cordiality, but also with some appearance of flurry and perplexity of mind. The fact was, that Lady Brambleton (who had a habit of remembering that she wanted something, exactly at the time when it was most inconvenient to gratify her wishes) had just called to mind that she had not examined Valentine's works yet through one of those artistic tubes which effectively concentrate the rays of light on a picture when applied to the eye. Knowing, by former experience, that the studio was furnished with one of these little instruments, her ladyship now intimated her ardent desire to use it instantly on "Columbus." Valentine promised to get it, with his usual ready politeness; but he had not the slightest idea where it actually was, for all that. Among the litter of small things that had been cleared out of the way, when the painting-room was put in order, there were several which he vaguely remembered having huddled together for safety in the bottom of his bureau. The tube might possibly have been among them, so in this place he determined to look for it—being quite ignorant, if the search turned out unsuccessfully, where he ought to look next.

After begging the new visitors to walk in, he opened the bureau, which was very large and old-fashioned, with a little bright

key hanging by a chain that he unhooked from his watch-guard, and began searching inside amid infinite confusion—all his attention concentrated in the effort to discover the lost tube. It was not to be found in the bottom of the bureau. He next looked, after a little preliminary hesitation, into a long, narrow drawer opening beneath some pigeon-hole recesses at the back. The tube was not there; and he shut the drawer to again, carefully and gently—for inside it was the hair bracelet that belonged to Madonna's mother, lying on the white handkerchief, which had also been taken from the dead woman's pocket. Just as he closed the drawer, he heard footsteps at his right hand, and turned in that direction rather suspiciously—locking down the lid of the bureau as he looked round. It was only the civil Mr. Gimble, wanting to know what Mr. Blyth was searching for, and whether he could help him. Valentine mentioned the loss of the tube; and Mr. Gimble immediately volunteered to make one of pasteboard. "Ten thousand thanks," said Mr. Blyth, hooking the key to his watch-guard again, as he returned to Lady Brambleton with his friend—"ten thousand thanks; but the worst of it is, I don't know where to find the pasteboard."

If, instead of turning to the right hand to speak to Mr. Gimble, Valentine had turned to the left, he would have seen that, just as he opened the bureau and began to search in it, Mr. Marksman finding the way into the painting-room clear once more, had rolled himself quietly round the door-post again; and had then, just as quietly, bent forward a little so as to look sidewise into the bureau with those observant eyes of his which nothing could escape, and which had been trained by his old Indian experience to be always unscrupulously at work, watching something. Little did Mr. Blyth think, as he walked away, talking with Mr. Gimble, and carefully hooking his key on to its swivel again, that Zack's strange friend had seen as much of the inside of the bureau as he had seen of it himself.

"He shut up his big box uncommon sharp when that smilin' little chap come near him," thought Mr. Marksman. "And yet there didn't seem nothing in it that strangers mightn't see. There wasn't no money there—at least none that I set eyes on. But it is not my business. Let's have another look at the picter."

In the affairs of art, as in other matters, important discoveries are sometimes made, and great events occasionally accomplished, by very ignoble agencies. Mat's deplorable ignorance of painting in general, and grossly illiterate misunderstanding of the subject represented by Columbus in particular, seemed to mark him out as the last man in the world who could possibly be as



sociated with art mystic in the character of a guardian genius. Yet such was the proud position which he was now actually selected by Fate to occupy. In plain words, Mr. Blyth's greatest historical work—his wonderful "Columbus" itself—had been for some little time in imminent danger of destruction by falling; and Mat's "look at the picture" was the all-important look which enabled him to be the first person in the room who perceived that it was in peril.

The eye with which Mr. Marksman now regarded the picture was certainly the eye of a barbarian, but the eye with which he afterward examined the supports by which it was suspended was the eye of a sailor, and of a good practical carpenter to boot. He saw directly that one of the two iron clamps to which the frame-lines of "Columbus" were attached, had been carelessly driven into a part of the wall that was not strong enough to hold it against the downward stress of the heavy frame. Little warning dribblets of loosened plaster had been trickling down rapidly behind the canvass; but nobody heard them fall in the general buzz of talking; and nobody noticed the thin, fine crack above the iron clamp, which was now lengthening stealthily minute by minute.

"Just let me by, will you?" said Mr. Marksman quietly to some of his neighbors. "I want to stop those flying women and the man in the crank ship from coming down by the long run."

Dozens of alarmed ladies and gentlemen started up from their chairs. Mat pushed through them unceremoniously; and was indebted to his want of politeness for being in time to save the picture. With a grating crack, and an accompanying descent of a perfect slab of plaster, the loose clamp came clean out of the wall, just as Mr. Marksman seized the unsupported end and side of the frame in his sturdy hands, and so prevented the picture from taking the fatal swing downward, which would have infallibly torn it from the remaining fastening, and precipitated it on the chairs beneath.

A tremendous confusion and clamoring of tongues ensued; Mr. Blyth being louder, wilder, and more utterly useless in the present emergency than any of his neighbors. Mat, cool as ever, kept his hold of the picture: and, taking no notice of the confused advice and cumbersome help offered to him, called to Zack to fetch a ladder, failing that, to "get a hoist" on some chairs, and cut the rope from the clamp that remained firm. Wooden steps, as young Thorpe knew, were usually kept in the painting-room. Where had they been removed to now? Mr. Blyth's memory was lost altogether in his excitement. Zack made a speculative dash at the flowing draperies which concealed the lumber in

one corner, and dragged out the steps in triumph. "All right; take your time, young 'un: there's a knife in my left-hand breeches' pocket," said Mat. "Now, then, cut away at that bit of rope's-end, and hold on tight at top, while I lower away at bottom. Steady! Take it easy, and—there you are!" With which words, Mr. Marksman left the picture resting safely on the floor, and began to shake his coat-tails free of the plaster that had dropped on them.

"My dear sir! you have saved the finest picture I ever painted," cried Valentine, warmly seizing him by both hands. "I can't find words to express my gratitude and admiration—"

"Don't worry yourself about that," answered Mr. Marksman; "I don't suppose I should understand you if you *could* find 'em. If you want the picture put up again, I'll do it. And if you want the carpenter's muddle-head punched, who put it up before, I shouldn't much mind doing that too," added Mat, looking at the hole from which the clamp had been torn with an expression of the profoundest workmanlike disgust.

A new commotion in the room—near the door this time—prevented Mr. Blyth from giving an immediate answer to the two friendly propositions just submitted to him.

At the first alarm of danger, all the ladies—headed by the dowager countess, in whom the instinct of self-preservation was largely developed—had got as far away as they could from the falling picture, before they ventured to look round at the process by which it was at last safely landed on the floor. Just as this had been accomplished, Lady Brambledown—who stood nearest to the doorway—caught sight of Madonna in the passage that led to it. Mrs. Blyth had heard the noise and confusion down-stairs, and finding that her bell was not answered by the servants, and that it was next to impossible to overcome her father's nervous horror of confronting the company alone, had sent Madonna down-stairs with him, to assist in finding out what had happened in the studio.

While descending the stairs with her old companion, the girl had anticipated that they might easily discover whether anything was amiss, without going further than the passage, by merely peeping through the studio-door. But all chance of escaping the ordeal of the painting-room was lost the moment Lady Brambledown set eyes on her. The dowager countess had always been one of Madonna's warmest admirers; and now expressed that admiration by pouncing on her with immense affection and enthusiasm from the painting-room doorway. Other people, to whom the deaf and dumb girl was a much more interesting sight than "Columbus," or the "Golden Age," crowded round her; all trying to get her, with great amiability and small in-

telligence, to explain what had happened by signs which no human being could possibly understand. Fortunately for Madonna, Zack (who ever since he had cut the picture down, had been assailed by an incessant fire of questions about Mr. Marksman from dozens of inquisitive gentlemen) happened to look toward her, over the ladies' heads, and came directly to explain, by signs that she could comprehend, the danger from which "Columbus" had escaped. She tried hard to get away, and bear the intelligence to Mrs. Blyth; but Lady Brambledown, feeling amiably unwilling to resign her too soon, pitched on the poor engraver standing tremulous in the passage, as being quite clever enough to carry a message up-stairs, and sent him off to take the latest news from the studio to his daughter immediately.

Thus it was that when Mr. Blyth left Zack's friend to see what was going on near the door, he found Madonna in the painting-room, surrounded by sympathizing and admiring ladies. The first words of explanation by which Lady Brambledown answered his mute look of inquiry, reminded him of the anxiety and alarm that his wife must have suffered; and he ran up-stairs directly, promising to be back again in a minute or two.

Mr. Marksman carelessly followed Valentine to the group at the doorway—carelessly looked over some ladies' bonnets—and saw Madonna, offering her slate to the dowager countess at that moment.

The sweet feminine gentleness and youthful softness of the girl's face, looked inexpressibly lovely, as she now stood shy and confused under the eager eyes that were all gazing on her. Her dress, too, had never more powerfully aided the natural attractions of her face and figure by its own lovable charms of simplicity and modesty, than now, when the plain gray merino gown, and neat little black silk apron that she always wore, were contrasted with the fashionable frippery of fine colors shining all around her. Was the rough Mr. Marksman himself lured at first sight into acknowledging her influence? If he was, his face and manner showed it very strangely.

Almost at the instant when his eye fell on her, that clay-cold change which had altered the color of his swarthy cheeks in the hosier's shop at Dibbledean, passed over them again. The first amazed look that he cast on her, slowly darkened, while his eyes rested on her face, into a fixed, heavy, vacant stare of superstitious awe. He never moved, he hardly seemed to breathe, until the head of a person before him accidentally intercepted his view. Then he stepped back a few paces; looked about him bewildered, as if he had forgotten

where he was; whispered to himself once again that name of "Mary," which the tobacconist's wife had heard him muttering in his heavy sleep; and turned quickly toward the door, as if resolved to leave the room immediately.

But there was some inexplicable influence at work in his heart that drew him back, in spite of his own will. He retraced his steps to the group round Madonna—looked at her once more—and, from that moment, never lost sight of her till she went up-stairs again. Whichever way her face turned, he followed the direction, outside the circle, so as to be always in front of it. When Valentine reappeared in the studio, and Madonna besought him by a look, to set her free from general admiration, and send her back to Mrs. Blyth, Mat was watching her over the painter's shoulder. And when young Thorpe—who had devoted himself to helping her in communicating with the visitors, nodded to her as she left the room, Mr. Marksman was close behind him.

## CHAPTER VI.

### THE FINDING OF THE CLUE.

MR. BLYTH'S friends, now that their common centre of attraction had disappeared, either dispersed again in the painting-room, or approached the door to take their departure. Zack, turning round sharply after Madonna had left the studio, encountered his queer companion, who had not stirred an inch while other people were all moving about him.

"Why, Mat! what the devil's come to you now? Are you ill? Have you hurt yourself with that picture?" asked Zack, startled by the incomprehensible change which he beheld in Mr. Marksman's face and manner.

"Come out," said Mat. Young Thorpe looked at him in amazement; even the sound of his voice had altered!

"Can you wait two minutes, old fellow? I wanted to go up-stairs, and say how-d'yed to Mrs. Blyth. But if you're really out of sorts, and—"

"Come out," repeated Mat, taking him by the arm, and forcing him to leave the room.

"What's wrong?" asked Zack. No answer. They went quickly along the passage and down to the garden-gate, in silence. As soon as they had got into one of the lonely by-roads of the new suburb, Mr. Marksman stopped short; and, turning full on his companion, said: "Who is she?" The sudden eagerness with which he spoke, so strangely at variance with his usual deliberation of tone and manner, made



those three common words almost startling to hear.

"*She?* Who do you mean?" inquired young Thorpe.

"That young woman they were all staring at."

For a moment, Zack contemplated the anxiety visible in his friend's face, with an expression of blank astonishment; then burst into one of his loudest, heartiest, and longest fits of laughter. "Oh, by Jove, I wouldn't have missed this for fifty pound. Here's old Rough and Tough smitten with the tender passion, like all the rest of us! Blush, you brazen old beggar, blush! You've fallen in love with Madonna at first sight."

"D—n your laughing. Tell me who she is."

"Oh, Lord! he's losing his temper now. Tell you who she is? That's exactly what I can't do."

"Why not! What do you mean? Does she belong to that man?"

"Oh, fie, Mat! You mustn't talk of a young lady *belonging* to anybody, as if she was a piece of furniture, or money in the three per cents, or something of that sort. Confound it, man, don't shake me in that way! You'll pull my arm off. Let me have my laugh, and I'll tell you everything."

"Tell it then; and be quick about it."

"Well, first of all, she is not Blyth's daughter—though some scandal-mongering people have said she is—"

"Nor yet his wife?"

"Nor yet his wife. What a question. He adopted her as they call it, years ago, when she was a child. But who she is, or where he picked her up, or what's her name, Blyth never *has* told anybody, and never *will*. She's the dearest, kindest, liveliest little soul that ever lived; and that's all I know about her. It's a short story, old boy; but devilish romantic—*isn't it?*"

Mr. Marksman did not immediately answer. He paid the most breathless attention to the few words of information that Zack had given him—repeated them over again to himself—reflected for a minute or so—then said:—

"Why won't he tell anybody who she is?"

"How should I know? It's a whim of his. And, I'll tell you what, Mat, here's a piece of serious advice for you: If you want to go there again, and make her acquaintance, don't you ask Blyth who she is, or let him fancy you want to know. He's touchy on that point—I can't say why; but he is. Every man has a raw place about him somewhere: that's Blyth's raw place, and if you hit him on it, you won't get inside of his house again in a hurry, I can tell you."

Still Mr. Marksman's attention fastened greedily on every word—still his eyes fixed eagerly on his informant's face—still he repeated to himself what Zack was telling him.

"By-the-by, I suppose you saw the poor dear little soul is deaf and dumb," young Thorpe continued. "She's been so from a child. Some accident; a fall, I believe. But it don't affect her spirits a bit. She's as happy as the day is long—that's one comfort."

"Poor creature! and so like *her*, too; it was almost as awful as seeing the dead come to life again—she had Mary's turn with her head; Mary's—ah, poor creature! poor creature!" He whispered these words to himself, under his breath, his face turned aside, his eyes wandering over the ground at his feet, with a faint, troubled, vacantly anxious expression.

"Oh, hang it! don't be getting into the dolefuls already," cried Zack, laughing again; and administering an exhilarating thump on the back to his friend. "The despairing lover don't suit your line of character, old boy. Cheer up! We're all in love with her; you're rowing in the same boat with Bullivant, and Gimble, and me, and lots more; and you'll get used to it in time, like the rest of us. I'll act the generous rival with you, brother Mat!" Here he struck a stage attitude. "You shall have all the benefit of my experience and advice gratis; and shall lay siege to our little beauty in regular form. How do you mean to make love to her? Did you ever make love to a squaw? Oh, Lord, he'll be the death of me if he goes on looking sentimental like that."

"She isn't his wife; and she isn't his daughter; he won't say where he picked her up, or who she is." Repeating these words to himself in a quick, quiet whisper, Mr. Marksman grew more thoughtful than ever. He looked away from young Thorpe, and did not appear to be listening to a single word that he said. His mind was running now on one of the answers he had wrested from Johanna Grice, at Dibledean—the answer which had informed him that Mary's child had been born alive!

"Wake up, Mat! You shall have your fair chance with the lady, along with the rest of us; and I'll undertake to qualify you on the spot for civilized courtship," continued Zack, pitilessly carrying on his joke. "In the first place, always remember that you mustn't go beyond passionate admiration at a respectful distance, at the first interview. At the second, you may make amorous faces, at close quarters—what you call, looking unutterable things, you know. At the third, you may get bold, and try her with a little present. Lots of people have done that, before you. Gimble tried it, and

Bullivant wanted to; but Blyth wouldn't let him: and I mean to give her—oh, by Jove! I've got another important caution for you." Here he indulged himself in a fresh burst of laughter, excited by the remembrance of his interview with Mrs. Peckover, in Mr. Blyth's hall. "Remember that the whole round of presents is open for you to choose from, except one; and that's a hair bracelet. You mustn't think of giving her—Hullo! What's the matter now?"

Zack's laughter came to an abrupt termination. Mat had raised his head suddenly, and was now staring him full in the face again, with a bright searching look—an expression in which suspicious amazement and doubting curiosity were very strangely mingled together.

"You're not angry with me for cracking a few respectable old jokes?" said Zack. "Hang it! I haven't said anything—Stop! yes I have, though I didn't mean it. You looked up at me in that queer way, when I told you about not giving her a hair bracelet; and I'll bet five to one you thought I said it to make fun of your not having any hair on your own head to give anybody—didn't you now?—D—n it, old fellow! I'm not such a beast as to make jokes on your misfortune. I never thought of you, or your head, or that infernal scalping business, when I said what I did. It was true—it happened to me. Don't go on looking like an old savage, Mat. I'll prove it to you. Look here, I wanted to give her a hair bracelet myself—my hair and Blyth's, and so on. And a queer old woman who seems to know Madonna (that's a name we give her) as well as Blyth himself, and keeps what she knows just as close, fell foul of me about it, all of a sudden, in the passage. She talked a lot of rignarole, and said a hair bracelet would be unlucky to Madonna; and then told me she had one already; and then wouldn't let me ask Blyth whether it was true, because I should get her into dreadful trouble if I said anything to him about it: besides a good deal more which you wouldn't care to be bothered with. But I have said enough—haven't I?—to show I was not thinking of you, when I rapped that out just now by way of a joke. Come, shake hands, old fellow. You're not offended with me now I have explained everything?"

Mat gave his hand; but he put it out like a man groping in the dark. He was thinking of that letter about a hair bracelet, which he had found in the box given to him by Johanna Grice.

"A hair bracelet?" he said, vacantly.

"Don't be sulky!" cried Zack, clapping him on the shoulder.

"A hair bracelet—unlucky to the young woman—and she's got one already" (he

was weighing attentively the lightest word that Zack had spoken to him). "What's it like?" he asked aloud, turning suddenly to young Thorpe.

"What's what like?"

"A hair bracelet."

"Still sticking to that, after all my explanations! Like? why it's hair plaited up, and made to fasten round the wrist, with gold at each end to clasp it by. What the devil are you stopping for again? I'll tell you what, Mat, I can make every allowance for a man in your love-struck situation—but if I didn't know how you had been spending the morning, I should say you were drunk."

They had been walking along quickly, while Mr. Marksman asked what a hair bracelet was like. But no sooner had Zack told him than he came to a dead pause—thought for a moment—started and changed color—opened his lips to speak—then checked himself, and remained silent. Young Thorpe's description had recalled to him a certain object that he had seen in the drawer of Mr. Blyth's bureau; and the resemblance between the two had at once flashed upon him. The importance which this discovery assumed in his eyes, in connection with what he had already heard, may be easily estimated when it is remembered that his barbarian life had kept him totally ignorant that a hair bracelet is in England one of the commonest ornaments of woman's wear.

"Are we going to stop here all day?" asked Zack. "Oh, confound it, if you're turning from sulky to sentimental again, I shall go back and have my talk with Mrs. Blyth, and pave the way for you with Madonna, old boy!" He turned in the direction of Valentine's house, as he said these words, anticipating in high glee all the jokes that he and his friends would make on the subject of Madonna's new conquest.

Mat did not offer to detain him: did not say a word at parting. He passed his hand wearily over his eyes as Zack left him. "I'm sober," he said vacantly to himself: "I'm not dreaming; I'm not light-headed, though I feel a'most like it. I saw that young woman as plain as I see them houses in front of me now; and by God if she had been Mary's ghost, she couldn't have been more like her!"

He stopped. His hand fell to his side; then fastened mechanically on the railings of a house near him. His rough, misshapen fingers trembled round the iron that they held incessantly. Recollections that had slumbered for years and years past, were awakening again awfully to life within him. Through the obscurity and oblivion of long absence, through the chill, changeless darkness of the tomb, there was shining out now, vivid and solemn on his memory



after a dimness of many years, the image—as she had been in her youthtime—of the dead woman, whose name was “Mary.” And it was only the sight of that young girl, of that poor shy-looking, tender-faced, deaf and dumb creature, that had wrought the miracle!

He tried to shake himself free of the influences that were now at work on him. He moved forward a step or two, and looked up. Zack!—where was Zack?

Away, at the other end of the solitary suburban street, just visible sauntering along and swinging his stick in his hand.

Without knowing why he did so, Mat turned instantly and walked after him, calling to him to come back. The third summons reached him: he stopped, hesitated, made comic gesticulations with his stick in the air—then began to retrace his steps.

The effort of walking and calling after him turned Mat’s thoughts in another direction. They now began to occupy themselves again with the hints that Zack had dropped (by way of explaining himself to his friend) of some incomprehensible connection between a supposititious hair bracelet and the young girl who was called by the strange name of “Madonna.” With the remembrance of this, there came back also the recollection of the letter about a bracelet, and its enclosure of hair, which he had examined in the lonely cattle-shed at Dibledean, and which still lay in the little box bearing on it the name of “Mary Grice.”

“Hullo there!” cried Zack, speaking as he came on. “Hullo, old Cupid, what do you want with me now?”

Mr. Marksman did not immediately answer. His thoughts were still travelling back cautiously over the ground that they had already explored. Once more, he was pondering on that little circle of plaited hair, having gold at each end, and looking just big enough to go round a woman’s wrist, which he had seen in the drawer of Mr. Blyth’s bureau. And once again, while he thought on it, the identity between this object and the ornament which young Thorpe had described as being the thing called a hair bracelet, began surely and more surely to establish itself in his mind.

“Now then, Mat, don’t keep us waiting,” continued Zack, laughing again as he came nearer: “clap your hand on your heart, and give me your tender message for the future Mrs. Marksman.”

It was on the tip of Mat’s tongue to emulate the communicativeness of young Thorpe, and speak unreservedly of what he had seen in the drawer of the bureau—but he suddenly restrained the words just as they were dropping from his lips. At the same moment his eyes began to lose

their vacant perturbed look, and to brighten again with something of intelligence and cunning added to their customary watchful expression.

“What’s the young woman’s real name?” he asked carelessly, just as Zack was about to banter him for the third time.

“Is that all you called me back for? The devil take your amorous impudence — What’s her real name? Her real name’s Mary.”

Mat had made his inquiry with the air of a man whose thoughts were far away from his words, and who only spoke because he felt obliged to say something. Zack’s reply to his question, however, startled him into instant and anxious attention.

“Mary!” he repeated in a tone of surprise. Then added quickly, “What else besides Mary?”

“How should I know? Didn’t I try and beat it into your muddled old head, half an hour ago, that Blyth won’t tell anybody anything about her?”

Mat turned a little away. The secrecy in which Mr. Blyth chose to conceal Madonna’s history, and the sequestered place in the innermost drawer of his bureau where he kept the hair bracelet, began vaguely and indefinitely to connect themselves together in Mr. Marksman’s mind. A curious smile hovered about his lips, and the cunning look in his eyes brightened more and more. “The painter-man won’t tell anything about her, won’t he? Perhaps that thing in his drawer will.” He muttered this to himself, putting his hands in his pockets, and mechanically kicking away a stone that happened to lie at his feet on the pavement.

“What are you mumbling about now?” asked Zack. “Do you think I’m going to stop here all day for the pleasure of hearing you talk to yourself? If you call after me again, you’ll call a long time before you get me to come back, old boy!” With these words, he vivaciously rapped his friend on the shoulder with his stick, and ran off in the direction of Mr. Blyth’s house.

“It was a hair bracelet. I know, by what Zack said, it was a hair bracelet,” continued Mat, still mumbling his words to himself, still with his hands in his pockets, still kicking at the pavement, though there was no stone left on it to kick now.

“I’ll see if I can’t have some fun with Mrs. Blyth about *you*!” thought young Thorpe, as he stopped for an instant, and turned round to see whether Mat was going home or not.

“I’ll see if I can’t have another look at your friend’s hair bracelet,” thought Mr. Marksman, glancing up at that moment, and nodding over his shoulder at Zack—then walking away quickly in the direction of Kirk street.

## CHAPTER VII.

## THE BOX OF LETTERS.

THE first thing Mr. Marksman did when he got to his lodgings was, to fill and light his pipe. He then sat down on his bearskins, dragged close to him the box he had brought from Dibledean, and straightway fell into a long and profound meditation. Although the machinery of Mat's mind was constructed of very clumsy and barbaric materials; although book-learning had never oiled it, and wise men's talk had never quickened it; somehow it always contrived to work on—much as it was working now—gloomily and sullenly at one time, fiercely and cunningly at another, often revolving in awkward roundabout directions, often pausing with many a heavy check and many a blundering entanglement; but, still, always pertinaciously arriving, sooner or later, at the practical results required of it. Solitude and peril are stern schoolmasters, but they do their duty, for good or evil, thoroughly with some men; and they had done it thoroughly, amid the rocks and wildernesses of the great American continent, with Mat.

Many a pipe did he empty and fill again, many a dark change passed over his heavy features, as he now pondered long and laboriously over every word of the dialogue that had just been held between himself and Zack. But not so much as five minutes out of all the time he thus consumed, was, in any true sense of the word, time wasted. He had sat down to his first pipe, resolved that, if any human means could compass it, he would find out how the young girl whom he had seen in Mr. Blyth's studio had first come there, and who she really was. When he rose up at last, and put the pipe away to cool, he had thought the matter fairly out from beginning to end, had arrived at his conclusions, and had definitely settled his future plans.

Reflection had strengthened him in the resolution to follow his first impulse when he parted from Zack in the street, and begin the attempt to penetrate the suspicious secret that hid from him and from every one the origin of Valentine's adopted child, by getting possession of the hair bracelet which he had seen laid away in the inner drawer of the bureau. As for any assignable reason for justifying him in even vaguely associating this hair bracelet with Madonna, he found it, to his own satisfaction, in the hints which had dropped from young Thorpe in reference to the strange words spoken by Mrs. Peckover in Mr. Blyth's hall—the suspicions resulting from these hints being also immensely strengthened, if not originally suggested, by certain recollections that occurred to him of the letter signed "Jane Holdsworth," and containing an enclosure

of hair, which he had examined in the cattle-shed at Dibledean.

According to that letter, a hair bracelet (easily recognisable, if still in existence, by comparing it with the hair enclosed in Jane Holdsworth's note) had once been the property of Mary Grice. According to what Zack had said, there was apparently some incomprehensible confusion and mystery in connection with a hair bracelet, and the young woman, whose extraordinary likeness to what Mary Grice had been in her girlhood, had at once excited in his mind the momentous doubt which first urged him to the purpose he was now pursuing. Lastly, according to what he himself now knew, there was actually a hair bracelet lying in a sequestered place in the innermost drawer of Mr. Blyth's bureau—this latter fragment of evidence assuming in his mind, as has been already remarked, an undue significance and importance, in relation to the fragments preceding it, from his not knowing that hair bracelets are common enough to be found in every house where there are women in a position to wear any jewelry-ornament at all.

Vague as they might be, the coincidences indicated above were sufficient to startle him at first—then to fill him with an eager, devouring curiosity—and then to suggest to him the uncertain and desperate course that he was now firmly resolved to follow. How he was to gain possession of the hair bracelet without Mr. Blyth's knowledge, and without exciting the slightest suspicion in the painter's family, he had not yet determined. But he was resolved to have it, he was perfectly unscrupulous as to means, and he felt certain beforehand of attaining his object. Whither, or to what excesses, that object might lead him, he never stopped and never cared to consider. The awful face of the dead woman, as she was in her youth (now fixed for ever in his memory by the living copy of it that his own eyes had beheld), seemed to be driving him on swiftly into unknown darkness, to bring him out into unexpected light at the end. The influence which was thus at work in him was not to be questioned—it was to be obeyed.

His resolution in reference to the hair bracelet was not more firmly settled than his resolution to keep his real sensations on seeing Madonna, and the purpose which had grown out of them, a profound secret from young Thorpe, who was too warmly Mr. Blyth's friend to be trusted. Every word that Zack had let slip had been of vital importance hitherto; every word that might yet escape him might be of the most precious use for future guidance. "If it's his fun and fancy," mused Mr. Marksman, "to go on thinking I'm sweet on the girl, let him think it. The more he thinks, the



more he'll talk. All I've got to do is to *hold in*; and then he's sure to *let out*."

While schooling himself thus as to his future conduct toward Zack, he did not forget another person who was less close at hand certainly, but who might also be turned to good account. Before he fairly decided on his plan of action, he debated with himself the propriety of returning to Dibbledean, and forcing from the old woman, Johanna Grice, more information than she had been willing to give him at their first interview. But, on reflection, he considered that it was better to leave this as a resource to be tried, in case of the failure of his first experiment with the hair bracelet. One look at that—one close comparison of the hair it was made of, with the surplus hair which had not been used by the jeweller, in Mary Grice's bracelet, and which had been returned to her in her friend's letter—was all he wanted in the first place; for this would be enough to clear up every present uncertainty and suspicion connected with the ornament in the drawer of Mr. Blyth's bureau.

These were mainly the resolutions to which his long meditation had now crookedly and clumsily conducted him. His next immediate business was to examine those letters in the box he had brought from Dibbledean, which he had hitherto not opened; and also to possess himself of the enclosure of hair, in the letter to "Mary Grice," so that he might have it always about him ready for any emergency.

Before he opened the box, however, he took a quick impatient turn or two up and down his miserable little room. Not once, since he had set forth to return to his own country, and to the civilization from which, for more than twenty years, he had been an outcast, had he felt (to use his favorite expression) that he was "his own man again," until now. A thrill of the old, breathless, fierce suspense of his days of deadly peril ran through him, as he now thought on the forbidden secret into which he was about to pry, and for the discovery of which he was ready to dare any hazard and use any means. "It goes through and through me, a'most like dodging for life again among the bloody Indians," muttered Mat to himself, as he trod restlessly to and fro in his cage of a room, rubbing all the while at the scars on his face, as his way was when any new excitement got the better of him.

At the very moment when this thought was rising ominously in Mr. Marksman's mind, Valentine was expounding anew the whole scope and object of "Art-Mystic," as pictorially exemplified in his "Columbus," to a fresh circle of admiring spectators—while his wife was interpreting to Madonna above-stairs, Zack's wildest jokes about his friend's love-stricken condition; and all

three were laughing gayly at a caricature, which he was maliciously drawing for them, of "poor old Mat," in the character of a scalped Cupid of the backwoods. Even the little minor globe of each man's social sphere has its antipodes-points; and when it is all bright sunshine in one part of the miniature world, it is all pitch darkness, at the very same moment, in another.

Mr. Marksman's face had grown suddenly swarthier than ever, while he walked across his room, and said those words to himself which have just been recorded. It altered again, though, in a minute or two, and turned once more to the cold clay color which had overspread it in the hosier's shop at Dibbledean, as he returned to his bearskins and opened the box that had belonged to "Mary Grice."

He took out first the letter with the enclosure of hair, and placed it carefully in the breast-pocket of his coat. He next searched a moment or two for the letter superscribed and signed by Johanna Grice; and, having found it, placed it on one side of him, on the floor. After this he paused a moment, looking into the box with a curious, scowling sadness on his face; while his hand vacantly stirred hither and thither, the different objects that lay about among the papers—the gayly-bound album, the lace-collar, the dried flower-leaves, and the other little womanly possessions which had once belonged to Mary Grice.

Then he began to collect together all the letters in the box. Having got them into his hands—some tied up in a packet, some loose—he spread them out before him on his lap, first drawing up an end of one of the bearskins over his legs for them to lie on conveniently. He began by examining the directions. They were all addressed to "Mary Grice," in the same clear, careful, sharply-shaped handwriting. Though they were letters in form, they proved to be only notes in substance, when he opened them; the writing, in some, not extending to more than four or five lines. At least fifteen or twenty were, for example, expressed, with unimportant variations, in this form:—

"MY DEAREST MARY: Pray try all you can to meet me to-morrow evening at the usual place. I have been waiting and longing for you in vain, to-day. Only think of me, love, as I am now, and always, thinking of you; and I know you will come. Ever and only yours. "A. C."

All these notes were signed in the same way, merely with initial letters. They contained nothing in the shape of a date, except the day of the week on which they had been written; and they had evidently been delivered by some private means—for there did not appear to be a postmark on

any of them. One after another Mat opened, and glanced at them—then tossed them aside into a heap. He pursued this employment quietly and methodically; but as he went on with it, a strange look flashed into his eyes from time to time, giving to them a certain sinister, and almost savage brightness, which altered very remarkably the whole natural expression of his face.

Other letters, somewhat longer than the note already quoted, fared no better at his hands. Dry leaves dropped out of some as he threw them aside; and little water-color drawings of rare flowers fluttered out of others. Hard botanical names which he could not spell through, and descriptions of plants which he could not understand, occurred here and there in postscripts and detached passages of the longer letters. But still, whether long or short, they bore no signature but the initials "A. C.;" still the dates afforded no information of the year, month, or place, in which they had been written; and still Mr. Marksman quietly and quickly tossed them aside one after the other, without so much as a word or a sigh escaping him, but with that sinister brightness flashing into his eyes from time to time. Out of the whole number of the letters, there were only two that he read more than once through, and then pondered over anxiously, before he threw them from him like the rest.

The first of the two was expressed thus:—

"I shall bring the dried ferns and the passion flower for your album with me this evening. You can not imagine, dearest, how happy and how vain I feel at having made you as enthusiastic a botanist as I am myself. Since you have taken an interest in my favorite pursuit, it has been more exquisitely delightful to me than any words can express. I believe that I never really knew how to touch tender leaves tenderly until now, when I gather them with the knowledge that they are all to be shown to *you*, and all to be placed in your own dear hand.

"Do you know, my own love, I thought I detected an alteration in you yesterday evening? I never saw you so serious. And then your attention often wandered, and, besides, you looked at me once or twice quite strangely, Mary—I mean strangely, because your color seemed to be coming and going constantly without any imaginable reason. I really fancied, as I walked home—and I fancy still—that you had something to say, and were afraid to say it. Surely, love, you can have no secrets from me! But we shall meet to-night, and then you will tell me everything (will you not?) without reserve. Farewell, dearest, till seven o'clock."

Mat slowly read the second paragraph of

this letter twice over, abstractedly twisting about his great bristly whiskers between his finger and thumb. There was evidently something in the few lines which he was thus poring over, that half saddened, half perplexed him. Whatever the difficulty was, he gave it up, and went on doggedly to the next letter, which was an exception to the rest of the collection, for it had a postmark on it. He had failed to notice this, on looking at the outside; but he detected directly on glancing at the inside that it was dated differently from those which had gone before it. Under the day of the week was written the word: "London"—noting which, he began to read the letter with some appearance of anxiety. It ran thus:—

"I write, my dearest love, in the greatest possible agitation and despair. All the hopes I felt, and expressed to you, that my absence would not last more than a few days, and that I should not be obliged to journey farther from Dibbledean than London, have been entirely frustrated. I am absolutely compelled to go to Germany, and may be away as long as three or four months. You see, I tell you the worst at once, Mary, because I know your courage and high spirit, and feel sure that you will bear up bravely against this unforeseen parting, for both our sakes. How glad I am that I gave you my hair for your bracelet, when I did; and that I got yours in return! It will be such a consolation to both of us to have our keepsakes to look at now.

"If it only rested with *me* to go or not, no earthly consideration should induce me to take this journey. But the rights and interests of others are concerned in my setting forth; and I must, therefore, depart at the expense of my own wishes, and my own happiness. I go this very day, and can only steal a few minutes to write to you. My pen hurries over the paper without stopping an instant—I hope I write intelligibly; but I am so agitated that I hardly know what I am saying to you.

"If anything, dearest Mary, could add to my sense of the misfortune of being obliged to leave you, it would be the apprehension, which I now feel, that I may have ignorantly offended you, or that something has happened which you don't like to tell me. Ever since I noticed, ten days ago, that little alteration in your manner, I have been afraid you had something on your mind that you were unwilling to confide to me. The very last time we saw each other, I thought you had been crying; and I am sure you looked away uneasily whenever our eyes met. What is it? Do relieve my anxiety by telling me what it is in your first letter! The moment I get to the other



side of the channel, I will send you word where to direct to. I will write constantly—mind you write constantly too. Love me, and remember me always till I return, never, I hope, to leave you again. “A. C.”

Over this letter, Mat meditated long before he quietly cast it away among the rest. When he had at last thrown it from him there remained only three more to examine. They proved to be notes of no consequence, and had been evidently written at an earlier period than the letters he had just read. After hastily looking them over, he searched carefully all through the box, but no papers of any sort remained in it. That hurried letter, with its abrupt announcement of the writer's departure from England, was the latest in date—the last of the series!

After he had made this discovery, he sat for a little while vacantly gazing out of window. His sense of the useless result to which the search he had been prosecuting had led him thus far, seemed to have robbed him of half his energy already. He looked once or twice at the letter superscribed by Johanna Grice, mechanically reading along the line on the cover: “Justification of my conduct toward my niece”—but not attempting to examine what was written inside. It was only after a long interval of hesitation and delay that he at last roused himself. “I must sweep these things out of the way, and read all what I've got to read before Zack comes in,” said he to himself, gathering up the letters in the heap at his feet, and thrusting them all back again together, with an oath, into the box.

He listened carefully once or twice after he had shut down the lid, and while he was tying the cords over it, to ascertain whether his wild young friend was opening the street-door yet or not. How short a time he had passed in Zack's company, yet how thoroughly well he knew him, not as to his failings only, but as to his merits besides! How wisely he foreboded that his careless, social, boisterous fellow-lodger would infallibly turn against him as an enemy, and expose him without an instant's hesitation, if young Thorpe got any hint of his first experimental scheme for discovering poor Mr. Blyth's anxiously-treasured secret by underhand and treacherous means! Mat's cunning had proved an invaluable resource to him on many a critical occasion already; but he had never been more admirably served by it than now, when it taught him to be cautious of betraying himself to Zack.

For the present there seemed to be no danger of interruption. He corded up the box at his leisure, concealed it in its accustomed place, took his brandy-bottle from the cupboard, opened Johanna Grice's letter—and still there was no sound of any one

entering, in the passage down-stairs. Before he began to read, he drank some of the spirit from the neck of the bottle. Was there some inexplicable dread stealing over him at the mere prospect of examining the contents of this one solitary letter? It seemed as if there was. His finger trembled so, when he tried to guide himself by it along each successive line of the cramped writing which he was now attempting to decipher, that he had to take a second dram to steady it. And, when he at length fairly began to examine the letter, he did not pursue his occupation either as quietly or as quickly as he had followed it before. Sometimes he read a line or two aloud, sometimes he overlooked several sentences, and went on to another part of the long narrative—now growling out angry comments on what he was reading, and now dashing down the paper impatiently on his knees, with fierce outbursts of oaths, which he had picked up in the terrible swearing-school of the Californian gold-mines.

He began, however, with perfect regularity at the proper part of the letter; sitting as near to the window as he could, and slanting the closely-written page before him so as to give himself the full benefit of all the afternoon light that still flowed into the room.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### JOHANNA GRICE'S NARRATIVE.

“I INTEND this letter to be read after my death, and I purpose calling it plainly a justification of my conduct toward my niece. Not because I think my conduct wants any excuse—for, except on one point, my conscience has always been tranquil on that head—but because others, ignorant of my true motives, may think that my actions want justifying, and may wickedly condemn me, unless I make some such statement in my own defence as the present. There may still be living one member of my late brother's family, whose voice would, I feel sure, be raised against me for what I have done. I could wish that this person, if still spared, might one day be able to read attentively what is here written; for it is addressed to the hasty and malicious accuser, as well as to the deliberate and impartial inquirer. The relation to whom I refer has been—”

(Here Mat, who had read carefully thus far, grew impatient, and, growling out some angry words, guided himself hastily down the letter with his finger till he arrived at the second paragraph.)

—“It was in the April of 1827 that the villain who was the ruin of my niece, and the dishonor of the once respectable family

to which she belonged, first came to Dibbledean. He took the little four-room cottage called Jay's cottage, which was then to be let furnished, and which stands out of the town about a quarter of a mile down Church lane. He called himself Mr. Carr, and the few letters that came to him were directed to 'Arthur Carr, Esq.' He was quite a young man—I should say not more than four or five and twenty—very quiet-mannered, and delicate or rather effeminate looking, as I thought; for he wore his hair quite long over his shoulders, in the foreign way, and had a clear, soft complexion, almost like a woman's. Though he appeared to be a gentleman, he always kept out of the way of making acquaintances among the respectable families about Dibbledean. He had no friends of his own to come and see him that I heard of, except an old gentleman who might have been his father, and who came once or twice. His own account of himself was, that he came to Jay's cottage for quiet, and retirement, and study; but he was very reserved, and would let nobody make up to him until the miserable day when he and my brother Joshua, and then my niece Mary, all got acquainted together.

"Before I go to anything else, I must say first that Mr. Carr was what they call a botanist. Whenever it was fine, he was always out of doors, gathering bits of leaves, which it seems he carried home in a tin case, and dried, and kept by him. He hired a gardener for the bit of ground round about Jay's cottage; and the man told me once that his master knew more about flowers, and how to grow them, than anybody he ever met with. Mr. Carr used to make little pictures, too, of flowers and leaves set together in patterns. These things were thought very odd amusements for a young man to take up with; but he was as fond of them as others of his age might be of hunting or shooting. He brought down many books with him, and read a great deal; but, from all that I heard, he spent more time over his flowers and his botany than anything else.

"We had, at that time, the two best shops in Dibbledean. Joshua sold hosiery, and I carried on a good dressmaking and general millinery business. Both our shops were under the same roof, with a partition-wall between. One day, Mr. Carr came into Joshua's shop, and wanted something which my brother had not got as ready to hand as the common things that the towns-people generally bought. Joshua begged him to sit down for a few minutes; but Mr. Carr (the parlor-door at the bottom of the shop being left open) happened to look into the garden, which he could see very well through the window, and said that he would like to wait there, and look at the flowers, while what he wanted was being got for

him. Joshua was only too glad to have his garden taken such notice of, by a gentleman who was a botanist; so he showed his customer in there, and then went up into the warehouse to look for what was wanted.

"My niece, Mary, worked in my part of the house, along with the other young women. The room they used to be in looked into the garden; and from the window my niece must have seen Mr. Carr, and must have slipped down-stairs (I not being in the way just then) to peep at the strange gentleman—or, more likely, to make believe she was accidentally walking in the garden, and so get noticed by him. All I know is, that when I came up into the workroom and found she was not there, and looked out of the window, I saw her, and Joshua, and Mr. Carr, all standing together on the grass-plot, the strange gentleman talking to her quite intimate, with a flower in his hand. I called out to her to come back to her work directly; and she looked up at me, smiling in her bold, impudent way, and said: 'Father has told me I may stop and learn what this gentleman is so kind as to teach me about my geraniums.' After that, I could say nothing more before the stranger; and when he was gone, and she came back triumphing, and laughing, and singing about the room, more like a mad play-actress than a decent young woman, I kept quiet and bore with her provocation. But I went down to my brother Joshua the same day, and talked to him seriously, and warned him that she ought to be kept stricter, and never let to have her own way, and offered to keep a strict hand over her myself, if he would only support me properly. But he put me off with careless, jesting words, which he learned to repent of bitterly afterward.

"Joshua was as good, and pious, and respectable a man as ever lived: but it was his misfortune to be too easy-tempered, and too proud of his daughter. Having lost his wife, and his eldest boy and girl, he seemed so fond of Mary, that he could deny her nothing. There was, to be sure, another one left of his family of children, who—"

(Here, again, Mat lost patience. He had been muttering to himself angrily for the last minute or two, while he read; and now once more he passed over several lines of the letter, and went on at once to a new paragraph.)

"I have said she was vain of her good looks, and bold, and flighty; and I must now add that she was also hasty, and passionate, and reckless. But she had wheeling ways with her, that nobody was sharp enough to see through but me. When I made complaints against her to her father, and proved that I was right in making them, she always managed to get him to forgive her. She could make anybody take her side



against me; and though I stood in the place of a mother to her, she had no respect for me, and never showed me any gratitude, and was always insulting and setting me at defiance, whenever she could get the opportunity. She behaved, from the outset, as perversely toward me as usual, in respect to Mr. Carr. It had flattered her pride to be noticed and bowed to, just as if she was a born lady, by a gentleman, and a customer at the shop. And the very same evening, at teatime, she undid before my face the whole effect of the good advice I had been giving her father. What with jumping on his knee, kissing him, tying and untying his cravat, sticking flowers in his button-hole, and going on altogether more like a child than a grown-up young woman, she wheedled him into promising that he would take her next Sunday to see Mr. Carr's garden; for it seems the gentleman had invited them to look at his flowers. I had tried my best, when I heard it, to persuade my brother not to accept the invitation, and let her scrape acquaintance with a stranger under her father's own nose; but all I could say was useless now. She had got the better of me, and when I put in my word, she had her bold laugh and her light answer ready to insult me with directly. Her father said he wondered I was not amused at her high spirits. I shook my head, but said nothing in return. Poor man! he lived to see where her 'high spirits' led her to.

"On the Sunday, after church, they went to Mr. Carr's. Though my advice was set at defiance in this way, I determined to persevere in keeping a stricter watch over my niece than ever. I felt that the maintaining of the credit and reputation of the family rested with me, and I determined that I would try my best to uphold our good name. It is some little comfort to me, after all that has happened, to remember that I did my utmost to carry out this resolution. The blame of our dishonor lies not at my door. I disliked and distrusted Mr. Carr from the very first; and I tried hard to make others as suspicious of him as I was. But all I could say, and all I could do, availed nothing against the wicked cunning of my niece. Watch and restrain her as I might, she was sure—"

(Once more Mat broke off abruptly in the middle of a sentence. This time, however, it was to strike a light. The brief day of winter was fast fading out—the coming darkness seemed to be deepening palpably over the pages of Johanna Grice's letter. When he had lit his candle, and had sat down to read again, he lost his place, and, not having patience to look for it carefully, went on at once with the first lines that happened to strike his eye.)

"Things were now come, then, to this pass, that I felt certain she was in the habit

of meeting him in secret: and yet I could not prove it to my brother's satisfaction. I had no help that I could call in to make me equal to cope with the diabolical cunning that was used to deceive me. To set other people to watch them, when I could not, would only have been spreading through Dibbledean the very scandal that I was most anxious to avoid. As for Joshua, his infatuation made him deaf to all that I could urge. He would see nothing suspicious in the fondness Mary had suddenly taken for botany, and drawing flowers. He let Mr. Carr lend her paintings to copy from, just as if they had known each other all their lives. Next to his blind trust in his daughter, because he was so fond of her, was his blind trust in this stranger, because the gentleman's manner was so quiet and kind, and because he sent us presents of expensive flowers to plant in our garden. He would not authorize me to open Mary's letters, or to forbid her ever to walk out alone. He even told me once that I did not know how to make proper allowances for young people. Allowances! I knew my niece better, and my duty as one of an honest family better, than to make allowances for such conduct as hers. I kept the tightest hand over her that I could. I advised her, argued with her, ordered her, portioned out her time for her, watched her, warned her, told her in the plainest terms that she should not deceive *me*—she or her gentleman! I was honest and open, and said I disapproved so strongly of the terms she kept up with Mr. Carr, that if ever it lay in my power to cut short their acquaintance together, I would most assuredly do it. I even told her plainly that if she once got into mischief, it would then be too late to reclaim her; and she answered in her reckless, sluttish way, that if ever she did get into mischief it would be nothing but my aggravation that would drive her to it; and that she believed her father's kindness would never find it too late to reclaim her again. This is only one specimen of the usual insolence and wickedness of all her replies to me."

(As he finished this paragraph, Mat dashed the letter down angrily on his knee, and cursed the writer of it with some of those gold-digger's imprecations which it had been his misfortune to hear but too often in the past days of his Californian wanderings. It was evidently only by placing considerable constraint upon himself that he now refrained from crumpling up the letter and throwing it from him in disgust. However, he spread it out flat before him once more—looked first at one paragraph, then at another, but did not read them; hesitated—and then irritably turned over the leaf of paper before him, and began at a new page.)

"When I told Joshua generally what I

had observed, and particularly what I myself had seen and heard on the evening in question, he seemed at last a little staggered, and sent for my niece to insist on an explanation. When he repeated to her what I had mentioned to him, she flung her arms round his neck, looked first at me and then at him, burst out sobbing and crying, and so got from bad to worse till she had a sort of fit. I was not at all sure that this might not be one of her tricks; but it frightened her father so that he forgot himself, and threw all the blame on me, and said my prudery and conspiring had tormented and frightened the poor girl out of her wits. After being insulted in this way, of course the only thing I could do was to leave the room, and let her have it all her own way with him.

"It was now the autumn, the middle of September; and I was at my wit's end to know what I ought to think and do next—when Mr. Carr left Dibbledean. He had been away once or twice before, in the summer, but only for a day or two at a time. On this occasion, a letter came from him to my niece. He had never written to her when he was away in the summer, so I thought this looked like a longer absence than usual, and I determined to take advantage of it to try if I could not break off the intimacy between them, in case it went the length of any more letter-writing. I most solemnly declare, and could affirm on oath if necessary, that in spite of all I had seen and all I suspected for these many months, I had not the most distant idea of the wickedness that had really been committed. I thank God I was not well enough versed in the ways of sin to be as sharp in coming to the right conclusion as other women might have been in my situation. I only believed that the way she was going on *might* be fatal to her at some future time; and, acting on that belief, I thought myself justified in using any means in my power to stop her in her present course. I therefore resolved with myself that if Mr. Carr wrote again, she should get none of his letters; and I knew her passionate and proud disposition well enough to know that if she could once be brought to think herself neglected by him, she would break off all intercourse with him, if ever he came back, immediately.

"I thought myself perfectly justified, standing toward her as I did in the place of a mother, and having only her good at heart, in taking these measures. On that head my conscience is still quite easy. I can not mention what the plan was that I now adopted, without seriously, if not fatally, compromising a living person. All I can say is, that every letter from Mr. Carr to our house, passed into my hands only, and was by me committed to the flames,

unread. These letters were at first all for my niece; but toward the end of the year two came, at different intervals, directed to my brother. I distrusted the cunning of the writer and the weakness of Joshua; and I put both these letters into the fire, unread like the rest. After that, no more came; and Mr. Carr never returned to Jay's cottage. In reference to this part of my narrative, therefore, I have only now to add, before proceeding to the miserable confession of our family dishonor, that I never afterward saw, and only once heard of the man who tempted my niece to commit the deadly sin which was her ruin in this world, and will be her ruin in the next."

(Mat was evidently getting more and more interested in the letter. Although, when he had first examined it, he had read the last sentence, by chance, in the shed at Dibbledean, he read it again carefully now—paused a moment—then resolutely went through it once more. After he had done this, he became suddenly very still and thoughtful. His brow darkened heavily, and that fierce brightness which had been flashing in his eyes a short time back, lightened up again in them, when he proceeded with the letter.)

"I must now return to what happened from my burning of the letters. When my niece found that week after week passed, and she never heard from Mr. Carr, she fretted about it much more than I had fancied she would. And Joshua unthinkingly made her worse by wondering, in her presence, at the long absence of the gentleman of Jay's cottage. My brother was a man who could not abide his habits being broken in on. He had been in the habit of going on certain evenings to Mr. Carr's (and, I grieve to say, often taking his daughter with him) to fetch the London paper, to take back drawings of flowers, and to let my niece bring away new ones to copy. And now, he fidgeted, and was restless, and discontented (as much as so easy-tempered a man could be) at not taking his usual walks to Jay's cottage. This, as I have said, made his daughter worse. She fretted and fretted, and cried in secret, as I could tell by her eyes, till she grew to be quite altered. Now and then, the angry fit that I had expected to see, came upon her; but it always went away again in a matter not at all natural to one of her passionate disposition. All this time, she led me as miserable a life as she could; provoking and thwarting, and insulting me at every opportunity. I believe she suspected me, in the matter of the letters. But I had taken my measures so as to make discovery impossible; and I determined to wait, and be patient and persevering, and get the better of her and her wicked fancy for Mr. Carr, just as I had made up my mind to do.



"At last, as the winter drew on, she altered so much, and got such a strange look in her face, which never seemed to leave it, that Joshua became alarmed, and said he must send for the doctor. She seemed to be half frightened out of her wits at the mere thought of it; and declared, quite passionately, all of a sudden, that she had no want of a doctor, and would see none and answer the questions of none. This astonished me as well as Joshua; and when he asked me privately what I thought was the matter with her, I was obliged of course to tell him the truth, and say I believed that she was almost out of her mind with love for Mr. Carr. For the first time in his life, my brother flew into a violent rage with me. I suspect he was furious with his own conscience for reminding him, as it must have done then, how foolishly over-indulgent he had been toward her, and how carelessly he had allowed her, as well as himself, to get acquainted with a person out of her own station, whom it was not proper for either of them to know. I said nothing of this to him at the time: he was not fit to listen to it—and still less fit, even had I been willing to confide it to him, to hear what the plan was which I had adopted for working her cure.

"As the weeks went on, and she still retreated in secret, and still looked unlike herself, I began to doubt whether this very plan, from which I had hoped so much, would after all succeed. I was sorely distressed in my mind, at times, as to what I ought to do next; and began indeed to feel the difficulty getting too much for me, just when it was drawing on fast to its shocking and shameful end. We were then close upon Christmas time. Joshua had got his shop-bills well forward for sending out, and was gone to London on business, as was customary with him at this season of the year. I expected him back, as usual, a day or two before Christmas day.

"For a little while past, I had noticed some change in my niece. Ever since my brother had talked about sending for the doctor, she had altered a little, in the way of going on more regularly with her work, and pretending (though she made but a bad pretence of it) that there was nothing ailed her, her object being, of course, to make her father easier about her in his mind. The change, however, to which I now refer, was of another sort, and only affected her manner toward me, and her manner of dressing herself. When we were alone together, now, I found her conduct quite altered. She spoke soft to me, and looked humble, and did what work I set her without idleness or murmuring; and once, even made as if she wanted to kiss me. But I was on my guard—suspecting that she wanted to entrap me, with her wheedling

ways, into letting out som thing about Mr. Carr's having written, and my having burned his letters. It was at this time also, and a little before it, that I noticed the alteration in her dress. She fell into wearing her things in a slovenly way, and sitting at home in her shawl, on account of feeling cold, she said, when I reprimanded her for such untidiness.

"I don't know how long things might have lasted like this, or what the end might have been, if events had gone on in their own way. But the dreadful truth made itself known at last suddenly, by a sort of accident. She had a quarrel with one of the other young women in the dressmaking-room, named Ellen Gough, about a certain disreputable friend of hers, one Jane Holdsworth, whom I had once employed, and had dismissed for impertinence and slatternly conduct. Ellen Gough having, it seems, been provoked past all bearing by some thing my niece said to her, came away to me in a passion, and in so many words told me the awful truth, that my brother's only daughter had disgraced herself and her family for ever. The unutterable horror and misery of that moment is present to me now, at this distance of time. The shock I then received struck me down at once: I never have recovered from it, and I never shall.

"In the first distraction of the moment, I must have done or said something downstairs, where I was, which must have warned the wretch in the room above that I had discovered her infamy. I remember going to her bed-chamber, and finding the door locked, and hearing her refuse to open it. After that, I must have fainted, for I found myself, I did not know how, in the work-room, and Ellen Gough giving me a bottle to smell to. With her help, I got into my own room; and there I fainted away dead again. When I came to, I went once more to my niece's bed-chamber. The door was now open; and there was a bit of paper on the looking-glass directed to my brother Joshua. She was gone from the honest house that her sin had defiled—gone from it for ever. She had written only a few scrawled wild lines to her father, but in them there was full acknowledgment of her crime, and a confession that it was the villain Carr who had caused her to commit it. She said she was gone to take her shame from our doors. She entreated that no attempt might be made to trace her, for she would die rather than return to disgrace her family, and her father in his old age. After this came some lines, which seemed to have been added, on second thoughts, to what went before. I do not remember the exact words; but the sense referred, shamelessly enough as I thought, to the child that was afterward born, and

to her resolution, if it came into the world alive, to suffer all things for its sake.

"It was at first some relief to know that she was gone. The dreadful exposure and degradation that threatened us, seemed to be delayed at least by her absence. On questioning Ellen Gough, I found that the other two young women who worked under me, and who were most providentially absent on a Christmas visit to their friends, were not acquainted with my niece's infamous secret. Ellen had accidentally discovered it; and she had, therefore, been obliged to confess to Ellen, and put trust in her. Everybody else in the house had been as successfully deceived as I had been myself. When I heard this, I began to have some hope that our family disgrace might remain unknown in the town.

"I wrote to my brother, not telling him what had happened, but only begging him to come back instantly. It was the bitterest part of all the bitter misery I then suffered, to think of what I had now to tell Joshua, and of what dreadful extremities his daughter's ruin might drive him to. I strove hard to prepare myself for the time of coming trial; but what really took place was worse than my worst forebodings. When my brother heard the shocking news I had to tell, and saw the scrawled paper she had left for him, he spoke and acted as if he was out of his mind. It was only charitable, only fair to his previous character, to believe, as I then believed, that distress had actually driven him, for the time, out of his senses. He declared that he would go away instantly and search for her, and set others seeking for her too. He said, he even swore, that he would bring her back home the moment he found her; that he would succor her in her misery, and accept her penitence, and shelter her under his roof the same as ever, without so much as giving a thought to the scandal and disgrace that her infamous situation would inflict on her family. He even wrested scripture from its true meaning to support him in what he said, and in what he was determined to do. And, worst of all, the moment he heard how it was that I had discovered his daughter's crime, he insisted that Ellen Gough should be turned out of the house: he declared, in such awful language as I had never believed it possible he could utter, that she should not sleep under his roof that night. It was hopeless to attempt to appease him. He put her out at the door with his own hand that very day. She was an excellent and a regular workwoman, but sullen and revengeful when her temper was once roused. By the next morning our disgrace was known all over Dibbledean.

"There was only one more degradation to be dreaded; and that it sickened me to think of. I knew Joshua well enough to

know that if he found the lost wretch he was going in search of, he would absolutely and certainly bring her home again. I had been born in our house at Dibbledean; my mother before me had been born there; our family had lived in the old place, honestly and reputably, without so much as a breath of ill-report breathing over them, for generations and generations back. When I thought of this, and then thought of the bare possibility that an abandoned woman might soon be admitted, and a bastard child born, in the house where so many of my relations had lived virtuously and died righteously, I resolved that the day, when *she* set her foot on our threshold, should be the day when I left my home and my birthplace for ever.

"While I was in this mind, Joshua came to me—as determined in his way as I secretly was in mine—to ask if I had any suspicions about what direction she had taken. All the first inquiries after her that he had made in Dibbledean, had, it seems, given him no information whatever. I said I had no positive knowledge (which was strictly true), but told him I suspected she was gone to London. He asked why. I answered, because I believed she was gone to look after Mr. Carr; and said that I remembered his letter to her (the first and only one she received) had a London postmark upon it. We could not find this letter at the time: the hiding-place she had for it, and for all the others she left behind her, was not discovered till years after, when the house was repaired for the people who bought our business. Joshua, however, having nothing better to guide himself by, and being resolved to begin seeking her at once, said my suspicion was a likely one; and went away to London by that night's coach, to see what he could do, and to get advice from his lawyers about how to trace her.

"This, which I have been just relating, is the only part of my conduct, in the time of our calamity, which I now think of with an uneasy conscience. When I told Joshua I suspected she was gone to London, I was not telling him the truth. I knew nothing certainly about where she was gone; but I did assuredly suspect that she had turned her steps exactly in the contrary direction to London—that is to say, far out Bangbury way. She had been constantly asking all sorts of questions of Ellen Gough, who told me of it, about roads, and towns, and people, in that distant part of the country: and this was my only reason for thinking she had taken herself away in that direction. Though it was but a matter of bare suspicion at the best, still I deceived my brother as to my real opinion when he asked it of me: and this was a sin which I now humbly and truly repent of. But the thought of helping him, by so little even as the chance assistance of a likely guess, to bring



our infamy home to our own doors, by actually bringing his degraded daughter back with him into my presence, in the face of the whole town—this thought, I say, was too much for me. I believed that the day when she crossed our threshold again would be the day of my death, as well as the day of my farewell to home; and under that conviction I concealed from Joshua what my real opinion was.

"I deserved to suffer for this; and I did suffer for it. Two or three days after the lonely Christmas-day that I passed in utter solitude at our house in Dibledean, I received a letter from Joshua's lawyer in London, telling me to come up and see my brother immediately, for he was taken dangerously ill. In the course of his inquiries (which he would pursue himself, although the lawyers, who knew better what ought to be done, were doing their utmost to help him), he had been misled by some false information, and had been robbed and ill-used in some place near the river, and then turned out at night in a storm of snow and sleet. It is useless now to write about what I suffered from this fresh blow, or to speak of the awful time I passed by his bedside in London. Let it be enough to say that he escaped out of the very jaws of death, and that it was the end of February before he was well enough to be taken home to Dibledean.

"He soon got better in his own air—better as to his body, but his mind was in a sad way. Every morning, he used to ask if any news of Mary had come; and when he heard there was none, he used to sigh, and then hardly say another word, or so much as hold up his head, for the rest of the day. At one time, he showed a little anxiety now and then about a letter reaching its destination, and being duly received; peevishly refusing to mention to me even so much as the address on it. But I guessed who it had been sent to easily enough, when his lawyers told me that he had written it in London, and had mentioned to them that it was going to some place beyond the seas. He soon seemed to forget this, though, and to forget everything, except his regular question about Mary, which he sometimes repeated in his dazed condition, even after I had broken it to him that she was dead.

"The news of her death came in the March of the new year 1828. All inquiries in London had failed up to that time in discovering the remotest trace of her. In Dibledean we knew she could not be; and elsewhere Joshua was now in no state to search for her himself, or to have any clear notions of instructing others in what direction to make inquiries for him. But in this month of March, I saw in the Bangbury paper (which circulates in our county besides its own) an advertisement calling on

the friends of a young woman, who had just died and left behind her an infant, to come forward and identify the body, and take some steps in respect to the child. The description was very full and particular, and did not admit of a doubt, to any one who knew her as well as I did, that the young woman referred to was my guilty and miserable niece. My brother was in no condition to be spoken to in this difficulty; so determined to act for myself. I sent, by a person I could depend upon, money enough to bury her decently, in Bangbury churchyard, putting no name or date to my letter. There was no law to oblige me to do more, and more I was determined not to do. As to the child that was the offspring of her sin, it was the infamous father's business to support and own it, and not mine.

"When people in the town, who knew of our calamity, and had seen the advertisement, talked to me of it, I admitted nothing and denied nothing—I simply refused to speak with them on the subject of what had happened in our family.

"Having endeavored to provide in this way for the protection of my brother and myself against the meddling and impertinence of idle people, I believed that I had now suffered the last of the many bitter trials which had assailed me as the consequences of my niece's guilt. I was mistaken—the cup of my affliction was not yet full. One day, hardly a fortnight after I had sent the burial-money anonymously to Bangbury, our servant came to me and said there was a stranger at the door who wished to see my brother, and was so bent on it, that he would take no denial. I went down, and found waiting on the doorsteps a very respectable-looking, middle-aged man, whom I had certainly never set eyes on before in my life.

"I told him that I was Joshua's sister, and that I managed my brother's affairs for him in the present state of his health. The stranger only answered that he was very anxious to see Joshua himself. I did not choose to expose the helpless condition into which my brother's intellects had fallen, to a person of whom I knew nothing; so I merely said the interview he wanted was out of the question, but that, if he had any business with Mr. Grice, he might, for the reasons I had already given, mention it to me. He hesitated, and smiled, and said he was very much obliged to me; and then, making as if he was going to step in, added that I should probably be able to appreciate the friendly nature of the business on which he came, when he informed me that he was confidentially employed by Mr. Arthur Carr. The instant he spoke it, I felt the name go to my heart like a knife—then my indignation got the better of me. I told him to tell Mr. Carr that the miserable creature

whom his villany had destroyed, had fled away from her home, had died away from her home, and was buried away from her home; and, with that, I shut the door in his face. My agitation, and a sort of terror that I could not account for, so overpowered me, that I was obliged to lean against the wall of the passage, and was unable for some minutes to stir a step toward going up-stairs. As soon as I got a little better, and began to think about what had taken place, a doubt came across me as to whether I might not have acted wrong. I remembered that Joshua's lawyers in London had made it a great point that this Mr. Carr should be traced; and though, since then, our situation had been altered by my niece's death, still I felt uncertain and uneasy—I could hardly tell why—at what I had done. It was as if I had taken some responsibility on myself which ought not to have been mine. In short, I ran back to the door and opened it, and looked up and down the street. It was too late: the strange man was out of sight, and I never set eyes on him again.

"This was in March, 1828, the same month in which the advertisement appeared. I am particular in repeating the date, because it marks the time of the last information I have to give in connection with the disgraceful circumstances which I have here forced myself to relate. Of the child mentioned in the advertisement, I never heard anything, from that time to this. I do not even know when it was born. I only know that its guilty mother left her home in the December of 1827. Whether it lived after the date of the advertisement, or whether it died, I never discovered, and never wished to discover. I have kept myself retired since the days of my humiliation, hiding my sorrow in my own heart, and neither asking questions nor answering them."

At this place, Mat once more suspended the perusal of the letter. He had now read on for an unusually long time with unflagging attention, and with the same stern sadness always in his face, except when the name of Arthur Carr occurred in the course of the narrative. Almost on every occasion when the finger by which he guided himself along the close lines of the letter, came to those words, it trembled a little, and the dangerous look grew ever brighter and brighter in his eyes. It was in them now, as he dropped the letter on his knee, and, turning round, took from the wall behind him, against which it leaned, a certain leather bag, already alluded to, as part of the personal property that he brought with him on installing himself in Kirk street. He opened it, took out a feather fan, and an Indian tobacco-pouch of scarlet cloth; and then began to search in the bottom of the bag, from which at length he drew forth a letter. It

was torn in several places, the ink of the writing in it was faded, and the paper was disfigured by stains of grease, tobacco, and dirt generally. The direction was in such a condition, that the word "Brazils," at the end, was alone legible. Inside, it was not in a much better state. The date at the top, however, still remained tolerably easy to distinguish: it was "December 26th, 1827."

Mat looked first at this and then at the paragraph he had just been reading, in Johanna Grice's narrative. After that, he began to count on his fingers, clumsily enough—beginning with the year 1828 as number one, and ending with the current year 1851, as number twenty-three. "Twenty-three," he repeated aloud to himself, "twenty-three year: I shall remember that." Then he looked down a little vacantly at the old torn letter again. Some of the lines, here and there, had escaped stains and dirt sufficiently to be still easily legible; and it was over these that his eyes now wandered. The first words that caught his attention ran thus: "I am now, therefore, in this bitter affliction, more than ever desirous that all past differences between us should be forgotten, and"—here the beginning of another line was hidden by a stain, beyond which, on the cleaner part of the letter, the writing proceeded: "In this spirit, then, I counsel you, if you can get continued employment anywhere abroad, to accept it, instead of coming back" (a rent in the paper made the next words too fragmentary to be easily legible). . . . "any good news be sure of hearing from me again. In the meantime, I say it once more, keep away, if you can. Your presence could do no good; and it is better for you, at your age, to be spared the sight of such sorrow as that we are now suffering:" (After this, dirt and the fading of the ink made several sentences near the end of the page almost totally illegible—the last three or four lines at the bottom of the letter alone remaining clear enough to be read with any ease.) . . . "the poor, lost, unhappy creature! But I shall find her—I know I shall find her; and then, let Johanna say or do what she may, I will forgive my own Mary, for I know she will deserve her pardon. As for *him*, I feel confident that he may be traced yet; and that I can shame him into the atonement of marrying her. If he should refuse, then the black-hearted villain shall—"

At this point, Mat abruptly stopped in his reading; and, hastily folding up the letter, put it back in the bag again, along with the feather fan and the Indian pouch. "I can't go on with that part of the story now, but the time *may* come, perhaps—" He pursued the thought which thus expressed itself in him no further, but sat still for a few minutes with his head on his



hand, and his heavy eyebrows contracted by an angry frown, staring sullenly at the flame of the candle. Johanna Grice's letter still remained to be finished. He took it up, and looked back to the paragraph that he had last read.

"As for the child mentioned in the advertisement"—those were the words to which he was now referring. "*The child?*"—There was no mention of its sex. "I should like to have known if it was a boy or a girl, thought Mat.

Though he was now close to the end of the letter, he roused himself with difficulty to attend to the last few sentences which remained to be read. They began thus:—

"Before I say anything, in conclusion, of the sale of our business, of my brother's death, and of the life which I have been leading since that time, I should wish to refer, once for all, and very briefly, to the few things which my niece left behind her, when she abandoned her home. Circumstances may, one day, render this necessary. I desire then to state, that everything belonging to her is preserved in one of her boxes (now in my possession), just as she left it. When the letters signed 'A. C.' were discovered, as I have mentioned, on the occasion of repairs being made in the house, I threw them into the box with my own hand. They will all be found, more or less, to prove the justice of those first suspicions of mine, which my late brother so unhappily disregarded. In reference to money or valuables, I have only to mention that my niece took all her savings with her in her flight. I knew in what box she kept them, and I saw that box open and empty on her table, when I first discovered that she was gone. As for the only three articles of jewelry that she had, her brooch I myself saw her give to Ellen Gough—her ear-rings she always wore—and I can only presume (never having found it anywhere) that she took with her, in her flight, her hair bracelet."

"By God! there it is again!" cried Mat, dropping the letter in astonishment, the instant those two significant words, "hair bracelet," caught his eye.

He had hardly uttered the exclamation, before he heard the door of the house flung open, then shut to again with a prodigious bang. Zack had just let himself in with his latch-key.

"I'm glad he's come," muttered Mat, snatching up the letter from the floor, and crumpling it into his pocket. There's another thing or two I want to find out, before I go any further—and Zack's the chap to help me."

## CHAPTER IX.

## A FEW MORE DISCOVERIES.

WHEN Zack entered the room, and saw his queer friend, with legs crossed and hands in pockets, sitting gravely in the usual corner on the floor, between a brandy-bottle on one side, and a guttering, unquilted candle on the other, he roared with laughter, and stamped about in his usual boisterous way, till the flimsy little house seemed to be trembling under him to its very foundations. Mr. Marksman bore all this noise and ridicule, and all the jesting that followed it about the utility of drowing his passion for Madonna in the brandy bottle, with the most unruffled and exemplary patience. The self-control he thus exhibited did not pass without its reward. Zack got tired of making jokes which had no effect, and of telling preposterous stories, which were received with the serenest inattention; and, passing at once from the fanciful to the practical, astonished Mr. Marksman by suddenly communicating a very unexpected and very important piece of news.

"By-the-by, Mat," said he, "we must sweep the place up, and look as respectable as we can before to-morrow night. My friend Blyth is coming to spend a quiet, social evening with us. I stayed behind till all the visitors had gone, on purpose to ask him."

"Do you mean he's coming to have a drop of grog and smoke a pipe along with us two?" asked Mr. Marksman, rather amazedly.

"I mean he's coming here, certainly; but as for grog and pipes, he never touches either. He's the best and dearest fellow in the world; but I'm ashamed to say he's spooney enough to like lemonade and tea. Smoking would make him sick directly; and, as for grog, I don't believe a drop ever passes his lips from one year's end to another. A weak head, Mat—a devilish weak head for drinking," concluded Zack, tapping his forehead with an air of bland Bacchanalian superiority.

Mr. Marksman seemed to have fallen into one of his thoughtful fits again. He made no answer, but, holding the brandy-bottle standing by his side up before the candle, looked in to see how much liquor was left in it.

"Don't begin to bother your head about the brandy; you needn't get any more of it for Blyth," continued Zack, noticing his friend's action. "I say, old boy, do you know that the best thing you ever did in your life was saving Valentine's picture in that way? You have regularly won his heart by it. He was deuced suspicious of my making friends with you before; but

now—by Jove! he doesn't seem to think there's a word in the English language that's good enough for you. He said he should be only too glad to thank you again, when I asked him to come and judge of what you were really like in your own lodging. Tell him some of those splendid stories of yours. I've been terrifying him already with one or two of them at second-hand. Tell him that, about when you and the other chaps were exploring, and all but starved to death, and just going to cast lots which should be killed to feed the rest. O Lord! how pale he'll turn when he hears that! and how hospitably we'll treat him—won't we? You shall make his hair stand on end, Mat; and I'll make him some tea."

"What does he do with them picters of his?" asked Mr. Marksman. "Sell 'em?"

"Of course!" answered the other, confidently; "and gets tremendous sums of money for them." Whenever Zack found an opportunity of magnifying a friend's importance, he always rose grandly superior to mere matter-of-fact restraints, and seized the golden moment without an instant of hesitation or a syllable of compromise.

"Gets lots of money, does he?" proceeded Mr. Marksman. "And keeps on hoarding of it up, I daresay, like all the rest of you over here?"

"He hoard money!" retorted Zack. "You never made a worse guess in your life. I don't believe he ever hoarded sixpence since he was a baby. If Mrs. Blyth didn't look after him, I don't suppose there would be five pounds in the house from one year's end to another."

There was a moment's silence. "It wasn't because he had money in it, then," thought Mat, "that he shut down the lid of that chest of his so sharp, when the smilin' little chap come up to speak to him. I wonder whether—"

"He's the most generous fellow in the world," continued Zack, lighting a cigar; "and the best pay: ask any of his tradespeople."

This remark suspended the conjecture that was just forming in Mr. Marksman's mind. He gave up pursuing it quite readily, and went on at once with his questions to Zack. Some part of the additional information that he desired to obtain from young Thorpe, he had got already. He knew now, that when Mr. Blyth, on the day of the picture-show, shut down the bureau so sharply on Mr. Gimble's approaching him, it was not, at any rate (as Mat had imagined in the studio), because there was money in it.

"Is he going to bring anybody else in here along with him, to-morrow night?" asked Mr. Marksman.

"Anybody else? Who the devil should

he bring? Why, you old barbarian, you don't expect him to bring Madonna into our jolly bachelor den to preside over the grog and pipes—do you?"

"How old is the young woman?" inquired Mat, contemplatively snuffing the candle with his fingers, as he put the question.

"Still harping on my daughter!" shouted Zack, with a burst of laughter. "She's older than she looks, I can tell you that. You wouldn't guess her at more than eighteen or nineteen. But the fact is, she's actually twenty-three; steady there! you'll be through the window if you don't sit quieter in your queer corner than that."

(Twenty-three! The very number he had stopped at when he reckoned off the difference on his fingers between 1828 and 1851, just before young Thorpe came in.)

"I suppose the next cool thing you will say, is that she's too old for you," Zack went on; "or, perhaps, you may prefer asking another question or two first. I'll tell you what, old Rough and Tough, the inquisitive part of your character is beginning to be—"

"Bother all this talking!" interrupted Mat, jumping up suddenly as he spoke, and taking a greasy pack of cards from the chimney-piece. "I don't ask no questions, and don't want no answers. Let's have a drop of grog and a turn-to at beggar-my-neighbor. Tuppence a time. Come on!"

They sat down at once to their cards and their brandy-and-water; playing uninterruptedly for an hour or more. Zack won; and—being additionally enlivened by the inspiring influences of grog—rose to a higher and higher pitch of exhilaration with every additional twopence which his good luck extracted from his adversary's pocket. His gayety seemed at last to communicate itself even to the imperturbable Mat, who, in an interval of shuffling the cards, was heard to deliver himself suddenly of one of those gruff chuckles, which have been already described as the nearest approach he was capable of making toward a civilized laugh.

He was so seldom in the habit of exhibiting any outward symptoms of hilarity, that Zack, who was dealing for the new game, stopped in astonishment, and inquired with great curiosity what it was that his friend was "grunting about." At first, Mat declined altogether to say; then, on being pressed, admitted that he was laughing over the recollection of something young Thorpe had told him after they left Valentine's studio; and, finally, under stress of much farther questioning, at last confessed that his mind was just then running on the "old woman" Zack had spoken of, as having "suddenly fallen foul of him in Mr. Blyth's passage, because he wanted to give



he young woman a present:" which circumstance, Mr. Marksman added, "so tickled his fancy somehow, that he would have given a crown-piece out of his pocket only to have seen and heard the whole squabble all through from beginning to end." Zack, whose fancy was now exactly in the right condition to be "tickled" by anything that "tickled" his friend, seized in high glee the humorous side of the topic suggested by Mat; and immediately began describing poor Mrs. Peckover's personal peculiarities in a strain of the most ridiculous exaggeration. Mr. Marksman listened, as he went on, with such admiring attention, and seemed to be so astonishingly amused by everything he said, that, in the excitement of success, he ran into the next room, snatched the two pillows off the bed, fastened one in front and the other behind him, tied the patchwork counterpane over all for a petticoat, and waddled back into his friend's presence, in the character of fat Mrs. Peckover, as she appeared on the memorable evening when she stopped him mysteriously in the passage of Mr. Blyth's house.

Zack was really a good mimic; and he now hit off all the peculiarities of Mrs. Peckover's voice, manner, and gait, to the life—Mat chuckling all the while, rolling his huge head from side to side, and striking his heavy fist applaudingly on the table. Encouraged by the extraordinary effect his performances produced, Zack went through the whole of his scene with Mrs. Peckover in the passage, from beginning to end; following that excellent woman through all the various mazes of "rhodomontade" in which she then bewildered herself, and imitating her terror when he threatened to run up-stairs and ask Mr. Blyth if Madonna really had a hair bracelet, with such amazing accuracy and humor, as made Mr. Marksman vehemently declare that what he had just beheld for nothing would cure him of ever paying money again to see any regular play-acting as long as he lived.

By the time young Thorpe had reached the climax of his improvised dramatic entertainment, he had so thoroughly exhausted himself that he was glad to throw aside the pillows and the counterpane, and perfectly ready to spend the rest of the evening quietly in his chair. Accordingly he mixed himself a second glass of grog, lit another cigar, and devoted all the attention he had to spare from these two luxuries, to a perusal of that famous sporting newspaper, known under the modest and suggestive title of *Bell's Life in London*. His friend did not interrupt him by a word, except at the moment when he sat down to the newspaper; and then, Mat said simply and carelessly enough, that he thought he should detect the original Mrs. Peckover directly,

by Zack's imitation, if ever he met with her in the streets. To which young Thorpe merely replied that he was not very likely to do anything of the sort, because Mrs. Peckover lived at Rubbleford, where her husband had some situation, and where she herself kept a little dairy and muffin-shop. "She don't come to town above once a year," concluded Zack, as he lit his cigar; "and then the Old Beauty stops in-doors all the time, at Blyth's!"

Mr. Marksman listened to this answer attentively, but offered no further remark. He went into the back room, where the water was, and busied himself in washing up all the spare crockery of the bachelor household in honor of Mr. Blyth's expected visit.

In process of time, Zack—on whom literature of any kind, high or low, always acted more or less as a narcotic—grew drowsy over his newspaper, let his grog get cold, dropped his cigar out of his mouth, and finally fell fast asleep in his chair. When he woke up, shivering, his watch had stopped, the candle was burning down in the socket, the fire was out, and Mr. Marksman was not to be seen, either in the front or the back room. Young Thorpe knew his friend's strange fancy for "going out over night" (as Mat phrased it) "to catch the morning the first thing in the fields," too well to be at all astonished at now finding himself alone. He moved away sleepily to bed, yawning out these words to himself: "I shall see the old boy back again as usual to-morrow morning, as soon as I wake."

When the morning came, this anticipation proved to be fallacious. The first objects that greeted Zack's eyes when he lazily awoke about eleven o'clock, were an arm and a letter, introduced cautiously through his partially opened bedroom-door. Though by no means contemptible in regard to muscular development, this was not the hairy and herculean arm of Mat. It was only the arm of the servant of all work, who held the barbarous Mr. Marksman in such salutary awe that she had never been known to venture her whole body into the forbidden region of his apartments since he had first inhabited them. Zack jumped out of bed, and took the letter. It proved to be from Valentine, and summoned him to repair immediately to the painter's house to see Mrs. Thorpe, who earnestly desired to speak with him. His color changed as he read the few lines Mr. Blyth had written, and thought of the prospect of meeting his mother face to face, for the first time since he had left his home. He hurried on his clothes, however, without a moment's delay, and went out directly—now walking at the top of his speed, now running, in his anxiety not to appear dilatory or careless in paying

obedience to the summons that had just reached him.

On arriving at the painter's house, he was shown into one of the parlors on the ground floor; and there sat Mrs. Thorpe, with Mr. Blyth to keep her company. The meeting between mother and son was characteristic on both sides. Without giving Valentine time enough to get from his chair to the door, without waiting an instant to ascertain what sentiments toward him were expressed in Mrs. Thorpe's face, without paying the smallest attention to the damage he did to her cap and bonnet, Zack saluted his mother with the old shower of hearty kisses and the old boisterously affectionate hug of his nursery and schoolboy days. And she, poor woman, on her side, feebly faltered over her first words of reproof—then, lost her voice altogether, pressed into his hand a little paper packet of money that she had brought for him, and wept on his breast without speaking another word. Thus it had been with them, long ago, when she was yet a young woman, and he but a boy—thus, even as it was now in the latter and the sadder time!

Mrs. Thorpe was long in regaining the self-possession which she had lost on first seeing her son. The circumstances connected with their present meeting agitated and overpowered her almost as much as the meeting itself. Her own wish had been to go alone to Zack's lodging; but Mr. Blyth (whom she had consulted in her emergency) would not bear of her doing this, until he had himself seen what sort of place it was, and what sort of people inhabited it; and he pressed on her his offer of his own abode, as the scene of the interview, with such earnestness that she was quite unable to refuse him. With her previous habits of implicit conjugal obedience, however, it was in fear and trembling that she now entered Valentine's house—from which, in deference to her husband's merciless prejudices she had been estranged for so many years past—without having first obtained Mr. Thorpe's express permission. The agitation consequent on engaging in an act of such doubtful propriety had been enough to unnerve her when she reached the painter's abode; but it was increased tenfold, when she went up-stairs (while Mr. Blyth was despatching his note to Zack), and renewed her long suspended acquaintance with Mrs. Blyth, and took Madonna by the hand for the first time since the deaf and dumb girl had been received into Valentine's house. The emotions thus aroused, had exhausted all the little resisting strength of her feeble powers of self-control: and so it happened that they succumbed almost without a struggle, under the heavy additional trial of a first meeting with her son since he had been a fugitive from his home.

Zack expressed his contrition over and over again, and many times reiterated his promise to follow the plan Mr. Blyth had proposed to him when they met at the turn-pike, before his mother became calm enough to speak three words together without bursting into tears. When she at last recovered herself sufficiently to be able to address him with some composure, she did not speak, as he had expected, of his past delinquencies, or of his future prospects, but of the lodging that he then inhabited, and of the stranger whom he had suffered to become his friend. Although Mat's gallant rescue of "Columbus" had warily predisposed Valentine in his favor, the painter was too conscientious to soften facts, on that account, when he told Zack's mother where her son was now living, and what sort of companion he had chosen to lodge with. Mrs. Thorpe was timid, and distrustful as all timid people are; and she now entreated him with nervous eagerness to begin his promised reform by leaving Kirk street, and at once dropping his dangerous intimacy with a perfect stranger, who must certainly turn out, sooner or later, to be a man of the vilest principles, being already by his own confession a vagabond of the idlest degree.

Zack defended his friend to his mother, exactly as he had already defended him to Valentine. Mr. Marksman had disinterestedly supplied him with money when he wanted it, and had hospitably given him a bed when he did not know where he was to sleep that night: therefore, although a little eccentric in his habits, no doubt, Mr. Marksman was the most generous, trustworthy, and respectable of men. Mrs. Thorpe hinted not a word against the excellence of her son's arguments, but preserved her own opinion nevertheless, in defiance of all he could say to shake it, until he bethought himself of promising her that in this matter, as in all others, he would be finally guided by the opinion of Mr. Blyth. The assurance so given, accompanied as it was by the announcement that Valentine was about to form his own judgment of Mr. Marksman by visiting the house in Kirk street that very night, seemed to quiet and satisfy Mrs. Thorpe. Her last hopes for her son's future, now that she was forced to admit the sad necessity of conniving at his continued absence from home, rested one and all on Mr. Blyth alone.

This first difficulty smoothed over, Zack asked, with no little apprehension and anxiety, whether his father's anger showed any symptoms of subsiding as yet. The question was an unfortunate one. Mrs. Thorpe's eyes began to fill with tears again, the moment she heard it. The news she had now to tell her son, in answering his inquiries, was of a very melancholy and a very hopeless kind.



The attack of palpitations in the heart which had seized Mr. Thorpe on the day of his son's flight from Baregrove square, had been immediately and successfully relieved by the medical remedies employed; but it had been followed, within the last day or two, by a terrible depression of spirits, under which the patient seemed to have given way entirely, and for which the doctor was unable to suggest any speedy process of cure. Few in number at all times, Mr. Thorpe's words had now become fewer than ever. His usual energy appeared to be gone altogether. He still went through all the daily business of the various societies to which he belonged; but it was mechanically, and without any apparent interest in the persons or events with which he was brought in contact. He had only mentioned his son once in the last two days; and then it was not to talk of reclaiming him, not to ask where he had gone, but only to desire briefly and despairingly that his name might not be mentioned again.

The doctor, in endeavoring to account for this sudden and serious moral alteration in Mr. Thorpe, could only say that his whole nervous system had been in a state of sad prostration and weakness for years and years past, and that even a slighter shock than the shock which it had so lately received, would have been powerful enough to have broken it down altogether, as it was but too surely broken down now. The only possible remedies to recover him from the condition to which he was reduced, were, change of air and scene, entire tranquillity, and absolute cessation from all employment of the brain—even to such slight occupation for it as the writing of an ordinary letter. When this advice was communicated to Mr. Thorpe, he positively refused to follow it. He declined giving up—only for the present, only for two or three months—any one of the honorary situations that he held, to any of the numerous friends who were willing to relieve him of his duties. He said, in the desponding tone which now never varied, that the performance of those duties was the last and best interest which he had left in life; and that he would hold to his various occupations, therefore, so long as he held to existence at all. It was useless to think of arguing him out of this resolution: every one who attempted it, from his wife downward, attempted it in vain.

So far as Zack's interests or apprehensions were now concerned, there was, for the present at least, no fear of any new collision occurring between his father and himself. When Mrs. Thorpe had told her husband (after receiving Valentine's answer to her letter) that their runaway son was "in safe hands," Mr. Thorpe never asked, as she had feared he would, "What hands?" And, again, when she hinted that it might

be perhaps advisable to assist the lad to some small extent, as long as he kept in the right way, and suffered himself to be guided by the "safe hands" already mentioned, still Mr. Thorpe made no objections and no inquiries, but bowed his head, and told her to do as she pleased; at the same time whispering a few words to himself, which were not uttered loud enough for her to hear. She could only, therefore, repeat the sad truth that, since his energies had given way, all his former plans and all his customary opinions, in reference to his son, seemed to have undergone some disastrous and sudden alteration. It was only in consequence of this alteration, which appeared to render him as unfit to direct her how to act as to act himself, that she had ventured to undertake the responsibility of arranging the present interview with Zack, and of bringing him the small pecuniary assistance which Mr. Blyth had considered to be necessary in the present melancholy emergency.

The enumeration of all these particulars—interrupted, as it constantly was, by unavailing lamentations on one side and by useless self-reproaches on the other—occupied much more time than either mother or son had imagined. It was not till the clock in Mr. Blyth's hall struck, that Mrs. Thorpe discovered how much longer her absence from home had lasted than she had intended it should on leaving Baregrove square. She rose directly, in great trepidation—took a hurried leave of Valentine, who was loitering about his front garden—sent the kindest messages she could think of to the ladies above-stairs—and departed at once for home. Zack escorted her to the entrance of the square; and, on taking leave, showed the sincerity of his contrition in a very unexpected and desperate manner, by actually offering to return home then and there with his mother, if she wished it! Mrs. Thorpe's heart yearned to take him at his word, but she remembered the doctor's orders and the critical condition of her husband's health, and forced herself to confess to Zack that the favorable time for his return had not yet arrived. After this, with mutual promises to communicate again soon through Valentine, they parted very sadly, just at the entrance of Baregrove square—Mrs. Thorpe hurrying nervously to her own door, Zack returning gloomily to Mr. Blyth's house.

Meanwhile, how had Mr. Marksman been occupying himself, since he had left his young friend alone in the lodging in Kirk street?

He had really gone out, as Zack had supposed, for one of those long night-walks of his, which usually took him well into the country before the first gray of daylight had spread far over the sky. On ordinary occasions, he only indulged in these oddly-timed

pedestrian excursions because the restless habits engendered by his vagabond life made him incapable of conforming to civilized hours, by spending the earliest part of the morning, like other people, inactively in bed. On this particular occasion, however, he had gone out with something like a special purpose: for he had left Kirk street, not so much for the sake of taking a walk, as for the sake of thinking clearly and at his ease. Mat's brain was never so fertile in expedients as when he was moving his limbs freely in the open air.

Hardly a chance word had dropped from Zack that night which had not either confirmed him in his resolution to possess himself of Valentine's hair bracelet, or helped to suggest to him the manner in which his determination to obtain it might be carried out. The first great necessity imposed on him by his present design was, to devise the means of secretly opening the painter's bureau; the second was to hit on some safe method—should no chance opportunity occur—of approaching it unobserved. Mat had remarked that Mr. Blyth wore the key of the bureau attached to his watch-chain; and Mat had just heard from young Thorpe that Mr. Blyth was about to pay them a visit in Kirk street. On the evening of that visit, therefore, the first of the two objects—the discovery of a means of secretly opening the bureau—must, in some way, be attained. How?

This was the problem which Mr. Marksman set off to solve, to his own perfect satisfaction, in the silence and loneliness of a long night's walk.

In what precise number of preliminary mental entanglements he involved himself, before arriving at the desired solution, it would not be very easy to say. As usual, his thoughts wandered, every now and then, from his subject in the most irregular manner; actually straying away, on one occasion, as far as the New World itself, and unintelligibly occupying themselves with stories he had heard, and conversations he had held, in various portions of that widely-extended sphere, with vagabond, chance-comrades from all parts of civilized Europe. How his mind ever got back from these past times and foreign places, to present difficulties and future considerations connected with the guest who was expected in Kirk street, Mat himself would have been puzzled to tell. But it did eventually get back, nevertheless; and, what was still more to the purpose, it definitely and thoroughly worked out the intricate problem that had been set it to solve.

Not a whispered word of the plan he had hit on dropped from Mr. Marksman's lips, as, turning it this way and that in his thoughts, he walked briskly back to town in the first fresh tranquillity of the winter

morning. Discreet as he was, however, either some slight practical hints of his present project must have oozed out through his actions when he got back to London, or his notion of the sort of hospitable preparation which ought to be made for the reception of Mr. Blyth was more barbarously and extravagantly eccentric than all the rest of his notions put together.

Instead of going home at once, when he arrived at Kirk street, he stopped at certain shops in the neighborhood to make some purchases which evidently had reference to the guest of the evening: for the first things he bought were two or three lemons and a pound of loaf-sugar. So far his proceedings were no doubt intelligible enough; but they gradually became more and more incomprehensible when he began to walk up and down two or three streets—looking about him attentively, stopping at every locksmith's and ironmonger's shop that he passed, waiting to observe all the people who might happen to be inside them, and then deliberately walking on again. In this way he approached, in course of time, a very filthy little row of houses, with some very ill-looking male and female inhabitants visible in detached positions, staring out of windows or lingering about public-house doors. Occupying the lower story of one of these houses was a small, grimy shop, which, judging by the visible stock-in-trade, dealt on a much larger scale in iron and steel ware than was old and rusty than in iron and steel ware that was new and bright. Before the counter no customers appeared; behind it there stood alone a squalid, bushy-browed, hump-backed man, as dirty as the dirtiest bit of iron about him, sorting old nails. Mat, who had unintelligibly passed the doors of respectable ironmongers, now as unintelligibly entered this doubtful and dirty shop, and addressed himself to the unattractive stranger behind the counter. The conference in which the two immediately engaged was conducted in low tones, and evidently ended to the satisfaction of both; for the squalid shopman began to whistle a tune as he resumed his sorting of the nails, and Mr. Marksman muttered to himself, "That's all right," as he came out on the pavement again.

His next proceeding—always supposing that it had reference to the reception of Mr. Blyth—was still more mysterious. He went into one of those grocer's shops which are dignified by the title of "Italian warehouses," and bought a small lump of the very best refined wax! After making this extraordinary purchase, which he put into the pocket of his trousers, he next entered the public-house opposite his lodgings, and, in defiance of what Zack had told him about Valentine's temperate habits, bought and brought away with him, not only a fresh



bottle of brandy, but a bottle of old Jamaica rum besides.

Young Thorpe had not returned from Mr. Blyth's, when Mat entered the lodgings with these purchases. He put the bottles, the sugar, and the lemons, in the cupboard, cast a satisfied look at the three clean tumblers and spoons already standing on the shelf—relaxed so far from his usual composure of aspect as to smile—lit the fire, and heaped plenty of coal on, to keep it alight—then sat down on his bearskins—wriggled himself comfortably into the corner, and threw his handkerchief over his face; chuckling gruffly for the first time since the past night, as he put his hands in his pockets, and so accidentally touched the lump of wax that lay in one of them.

"Now I'm all ready for Zack's friend," growled Mr. Marksman behind the handkerchief, as he quietly settled himself to go to sleep.

## CHAPTER X.

### THE SQUAW'S MIXTURE.

LIKE the vast majority of those persons who are favored by nature with, what is commonly termed, "a high flow of animal spirits," Zack was liable, at certain rare times and seasons, to fall from the utmost heights of exhilaration to the profoundest depths of despair, without stopping for a moment, by the way, at any intermediate stages of moderate cheerfulness, pensive depression, or tearful gloom. After he had parted from his mother, he presented himself, again at Mr. Blyth's house, in such a lamentably despairing condition of mind, and talked of his delinquencies and their effects on his father's spirits, with such vehement bitterness of self-reproach, as quite amazed Valentine, and even alarmed him a little on the lad's account. The good-natured painter was no friend to contrite desperation of any kind, and no believer in repentance, which could not look hopefully forward to the future, as well as sorrowfully back at the past. So he laid down his brush, just as he was about to begin varnishing the "Golden Age;" and set himself to console Zack, by reminding him of all the credit and honor he might yet win, if he was regular in attending to his new studies—if he never flinched from work at the British Museum, and the private drawing school to which he was immediately to be introduced—and if he ended as he well might end, in excusing to his father his determination to be an artist, by showing Mr. Thorpe a prize-medal, honorably won by the industry of his son's hand in the schools of the royal academy.

A necessary characteristic of people whose spirits are always running into extremes, is that they are generally able to pass from one change of mood to another with unusual facility. By the time Zack had exhausted Mr. Blyth's copious stores of consolation had partaken of an excellent and plentiful hot lunch, and had passed an hour up-stairs with the ladies, he had recovered his accustomed gayety in the most complete and magical manner. He predicted his own reformation now, just as confidently as he had predicted his own ruin about two hours before; and went away to Kirk street, to see that his friend Mat was at home to receive Valentine that evening, stepping along as nimbly and swinging his stick as cheerfully, as if he had already vindicated himself to his father by winning every prize medal that the royal academy could bestow on him.

Seven o'clock had been fixed as the hour at which Mr. Blyth was to present himself at the hospitable back and front drawing-room apartments of Messrs. M. Marksman and Z. Thorpe, junior. He arrived punctual to the appointed time, dressed jauntily for the occasion in a short blue frock-coat, famous among all his acquaintances for its smartness of cut and its fabulous old age. From what Zack had told him of Mat's lighter peculiarities of character, he anticipated rather a quaint and divertingly uncivilized reception from the elder of his two hosts; and when he got to Kirk street, he certainly found that his expectations were, upon the whole, handsomely realized.

On mounting the dark and narrow wooden staircase of the tobacconist's shop, his nose was greeted by a composite smell of fried liver and bacon, brandy and water, and cigar smoke, pouring hospitably down to meet him through every practicable crevice of the drawing-room door. When he got into the room, the first object that struck his eyes at one end of it, was Zack, with his hat on, vigorously engaged in freshening up the dusty carpet with a damp mop; and Mr. Marksman, at the other, presiding over the frying-pan, with his coat off, his shirt-sleeves rolled up to his shoulders, a glass of steaming hot grog on the chimney-piece above him, and a long pewter toasting-fork in his hand. "Hallo, Mat! here's the honored guest of the evening arrived before I've swabbed down the decks," cried Zack, jogging his friend in the ribs with the long handle of the mop. "How are you, tonight?" said Mr. Marksman, with familiar ease, not moving from the frying-pan, but getting his right hand free to offer to Mr. Blyth by taking the pewter toasting-fork between his teeth. "Sit down anywhere you like: and just holler through the crack in the floor, under the bearskins there, if you want anything out of the bocker-shop

below"—("He means tobacco when he says bocker," interposed Zack, parenthetically.)

"Can you grub a baked tater or two?" continued Mat, tapping a small dutch-oven before the fire with his toasting-fork. "We've got you a lot of fizzin' hot liver and bacon to ease down the taters with what you call a relish. Nice and streaky, ain't it?" Here Mr. Marksman stuck his fork into a slice of bacon, and politely passed it over his shoulder for Mr. Blyth to inspect, as he stood bewildered in the middle of the room.

"Oh, delicious, delicious!" cried Valentine, smelling daintily at the outstretched bacon as if it had been a nosegay. "Really, my dear sir—" He said no more; for at that moment he tripped himself up upon one of some ten or a dozen bottle-corks which lay about on the carpet where he was standing. There is very little doubt, if Zack had not been by to catch him, that Mr. Blyth would just then have concluded his polite answer to Mr. Marksman by suddenly measuring his full length on the floor.

"Why don't you put him into a chair?" growled Mat, looking round reproachfully from the frying-pan, as Valentine recovered his erect position again with young Thorpe's assistance.

"I was just going to swab up that part of the carpet when you came in," said Zack, apologetically, as he led Mr. Blyth to a chair.

"Oh, don't mention it," answered Valentine, laughing. "It was all my awkwardness, my—" He stopped abruptly again. Zack had placed him with his back to the fire, against a table covered with a large and dirty cloth which flowed to the floor, and under which, while he was speaking, he had been gently endeavoring to insinuate his legs. Amazement bereft him of the power of speech when, on succeeding in this effort, he found that his feet came in contact with a perfect hillock of empty bottles, oyster-shells, and broken crockery, heaped under the table. "Good gracious me! I hope I'm doing no mischief!" exclaimed Valentine, as a miniature avalanche of oyster-shells clattered down on his intruding foot, and a plump bottle with a broken neck rolled lazily out from under the tablecloth, and courted observation on the open floor.

"Kick about, old chap, kick about as much as you please," cried Zack, seating himself opposite Mr. Blyth, and bringing down a second avalanche of oyster-shells to encourage him. "The fact is, we are rather put to it for space here, so we keep the cloth always laid for dinner, and make a temporary lumber-room of the place under the table. Rather a new idea that, I think

—not tidy, perhaps, but new and ingenious which is much better."

"Oh, wonderfully ingenious!" said Valentine, who was now beginning to be amused as well as amazed by his reception in Kirk street. "Rather untidy, perhaps, as you say, Zack; but new and not disagreeable I suppose when you're used to it. What I like about all this," continued Mr. Blyth, rubbing his hands cheerfully, and kicking into view another empty bottle, as he settled himself in his chair—"what I like about this is, that it's so thoroughly free and easy. Do you know that I really feel at home already, though I never was here before in my life?—Curious, Zack, isn't it?"

"Taters!" roared Mr. Marksman suddenly from the fireplace. Valentine started, first at the unexpected shout just behind him, next at the sight of a big truculently-knobbed potato which came flying over his head, and was dexterously caught, and instantly deposited on the dirty tablecloth by Zack. "Two, three, four, five, six," continued Mat, keeping the frying-pan going with one hand, and tossing the baked potatoes with the other over Mr. Blyth's head, in quick succession for young Thorpe to catch. "What do you think of our way of dishing up potatoes in Kirk street?" asked Zack in great triumph. "Oh, capital," stammered Valentine, ducking his head as each edible missile flew over it. "Capital! So free and easy—so delightfully free and easy." "Ready there with your plates. The liver's a-coming," cried Mat in a voice of martial command, suddenly showing his great red-hot perspiring face at the table, as he wheeled round from the fire, with the hissing frying-pan in one hand, and the long toasting-fork in the other. "My dear sir, I'm shocked to see you taking all this trouble," exclaimed Mr. Blyth. "Do pray let me help you!" "No, I'm d—d if I do," returned Mr. Marksman with the most polite suavity and the most perfect good humor. "Let him have all the trouble, Blyth," said Zack; "let him help you, and don't pity him. He'll make up for all his hard work, I can tell you, when he sets in seriously to his liver and bacon. Just you watch him when he begins—he bolts his dinner like the lion in the Zoological gardens."

Mr. Marksman appeared to receive this speech of Zack's as a very welcome and well-merited compliment, for he chuckled at young Thorpe and winked grimly at Valentine, as he sat down bare-armed to his own mess of liver and bacon. It was certainly a rare and even startling sight to see Mat eat. Lump by lump, without one intervening morsel of bread, he tossed the meat into his mouth rather than put it there—turned it apparently once round be



tween his teeth—and then voraciously and instantly swallowed it whole. By the time a quarter of Mr. Blyth's plateful of liver and bacon, and half of Zack's, had disappeared, Mr. Marksman had finished his frugal meal; had wiped his mouth on the back of his hand, and the back of his hand on the leg of his trousers; had mixed two glasses of strong hot rum-and-water for himself and Zack; and had set to work on the composition of a third tumbler, into which sugar, brandy, lemon-juice, rum, and hot water all seemed to drop together in such incessant and confusing little dribbles, that it was quite impossible to tell which ingredient was uppermost in the whole mixture. When the tumbler was full, he set it down on the table, with an indicative bang, close to Valentine's plate.

"Just try a toothful of that, to begin with," said Mat. "If you like it, say Yes; if you don't, say No; and I'll make it better next time."

"You are very kind, very kind indeed," answered Mr. Blyth, eyeing the tumbler by his side with some little confusion and hesitation; "but really, though I should be shocked to appear ungrateful, I'm afraid I must own—Zack, you ought to have told your friend—"

"So I did," said Zack, sipping his rum-and-water with infinite relish.

"The fact is, my dear sir," continued Valentine, "I have the most wretched head in the world for strong liquor of any kind—"

"This ain't strong liquor," interposed Mr. Marksman, emphatically tapping the rim of his guest's tumbler with his forefinger.

"Perhaps," pursued Mr. Blyth, with a polite smile, "I ought to have said grog."

"This ain't grog," retorted Mat, with two disputatious taps on the rim of the glass.

"Dear me!" asked Valentine, amazedly, "what is it then?"

"Squaw's mixture," replied Mr. Marksman, with three distinct taps of asseveration.

Mr. Blyth and Zack laughed, under the impression that their queer companion was joking with them. Mat looked steadily and sternly from one to the other; then repeated with the roughest gravity—"squaw's mixture."

"What a very curious name! How is it made?" asked Valentine.

"Enough brandy to spile the water. Enough rum to spile the brandy-and-water. Enough lemon to spile the rum and brandy and water. Enough sugar to spile everything. That's 'squaw's mixture,'" responded Mr. Marksman with perfect calmness and deliberation.

Zack began to laugh uproariously. Mat became more inflexibly grave than ever.

Mr. Blyth felt that he was growing interested on the subject of the "squaw's mixture." He stirred it diffidently with his spoon, and asked with great curiosity how Mr. Marksman first learnt to make it.

"When I was out, over there, in the Nor'-West," began Mat, nodding toward the particular point of the compass that he mentioned.

"When he says Nor'-West, and wags his addled old head like that at the chimney-pots over the way, he means North America," Zack explained.

"When I was out Nor'-West," repeated Mat, heedless of the interruption, "working along with the exploring gang, our stock of liquor fell short, and we had to make the best of it in the cold with a spirit of spirits and a pinch of sugar, drowned in more hot water than had ever got down the throat of e'er a man of the lot of us before. We christened the brew 'squaw's mixture,' because it was such weak stuff that even a woman couldn't have got drunk on it if she tried. Squaw means woman in those parts, you know; and mixture means—what you've got afore you now. I knowed you couldn't stand regular grog, and that's why I cooked it up for you. Don't keep on stirring of it with a spoon like that, or you'll stir it away altogether. Try it."

"Let me try it—let's see how weak it is," cried Zack, reaching over to Valentine.

"Don't you go a-shoving of your oar into another man's rollocks," said Mr. Marksman, dexterously knocking Zack's spoon out of his hand just as it touched Mr. Blyth's tumbler. "You stick to *your* grog; I'll stick to *my* grog; and *he'll* stick to 'squaw's mixture.'" With these words, Mat leant his bare elbows on the table, and watched Valentine's first experimental sip with great curiosity.

The result was not successful. When Mr. Blyth put down the tumbler, all the watery part of the "squaw's mixture" seemed to have got up into his eyes, and all the spirituous part to have stopped short at his lungs. He shook his head, coughed, and faintly exclaimed—"Too strong."

"Too hot, you mean?" said Mat.

"No, indeed," pleaded poor Mr. Blyth, "I really meant too strong."

"Try again," suggested Zack, who was far advanced toward the bottom of his own tumbler already. "Try again; your liquor all went the wrong way last time."

"More sugar," said Mr. Marksman, neatly tossing two lumps into the glass from where he sat. "More lemon," squeezing one or two drops of juice, and three or four pips, into the mixture. "More water," pouring in about a teaspoonful, with a clumsy flourish of the kettle. "Try again."

"Thank you, thank you a thousand times.

Really, do you know, it tastes much nicer now," said Mr. Blyth, beginning cautiously with a spoonful of the "squaw's mixture" at a time.

Mr. Marksman's spirits seemed to rise immensely at this announcement. He lit his pipe—then took up his glass of grog: nodded to Valentine and young Thorpe, just as he had nodded to the northwest point of the compass a minute or two before: muttered solemnly, "Here's all our good healths;" and finished half his liquor at a draught.

"All our good healths," repeated Mr. Blyth, gallantly attacking the "squaw's mixture" this time, without any intermediate assistance from the spoon.

"All our good healths," chimed in Zack, draining his glass to the bottom. "Really, Mat, it's quite delightful to see how your dormant social qualities are waking up and asserting themselves now you're fairly plunged into the vortex of society. What do you say to giving a ball here next? You're just the man to get on with the ladies, if you could only be prevailed on to wear your coat, and give up airing your tawny old arms in public."

"Don't, my dear sir! I particularly beg you won't," cried Valentine, as Mr. Marksman, apparently awakened to a sense of polite propriety by Zack's last hint, began to unroll one of his tightly tucked-up shirt-sleeves. "Pray, consult your own comfort, and keep your sleeves as they were—pray, do! As an artist, I have been admiring your arms from the professional point of view, ever since we first sat down to table. I never remember—never, I assure you, in all my long experience of the living model—having met with such a splendid muscular development as yours." With these words, Mr. Blyth waved his hand several times before Mat's arms; regarding them with his eyes partially closed and his head very much on one side, just as he was accustomed to look at his pictures. Mr. Marksman stared, smoked vehemently, folded the objects of Valentine's admiration over his breast, and, modestly scratching his elbows, looked at young Thorpe with an expression of utter bewilderment. "Yes; decidedly the most magnificent muscular development I ever remember studying," reiterated Mr. Blyth, drumming with his fingers on the table, and concentrating the whole of his critical acumen in one eye, by totally closing the other.

"Hang it, Blyth," remonstrated Zack, "don't keep on looking at the old boy's arms like that, as if they were a couple of bits of prize beef! You may talk about his muscular development as much as you please, but you can't have the smallest notion of what it's really equal to, till you try it. I say, Mat! jump up, and show

him how strong you are. Just lift him on your toe, like you did me." (Here Zack pulled Mr. Marksman unceremoniously out of his chair.) "Come along, Blyth! Get opposite to him—give him hold of your hand—stand on the toe part of his right foot—don't wriggle about—stiffen your hand and arm—and—there! what do you say to his muscular development now?" concluded Zack, with an air of supreme triumph, as Mat slowly lifted from the ground the foot on which Mr. Blyth was standing, and, steadying himself on his left leg, raised the astonished painter with his right, nearly two feet high in the air.

Any spectator observing the performance of this feat of strength, and looking only at Mr. Marksman, might well have thought it impossible that any human being could present a more comical aspect than he now exhibited, with his black skull-cap pushed a little on one side, and showing an inch or so of his bald head, with his grimly grinning face empurpled by the violent physical exertion of the moment, and with his thick, heavy figure ridiculously perched on one leg. Mr. Blyth, however, was beyond all comparison the more laughable object of the two, as he soared nervously into the air on Mat's foot, tottering infirmly in the strong grasp that supported him, till he seemed to be trembling all over from the tips of his crisp black hair to the flying tails of his frock-coat. As for the expression of his round rosy face, with the bright eyes fixed in a startled stare, and the plump cheeks crumpled up by an uneasy smile, it was so exquisitely absurd, as young Thorpe saw it over his fellow-lodger's black skull-cap, that he roared again with laughter. "Oh, Mat, Mat!" cried Zack, falling back in his chair, "look up at him! Look at his face, for heaven's sake, before you put him down!"

But Mr. Marksman was not to be moved by this appeal. All the attention his eyes could spare during those few moments, was devoted, not to Mr. Blyth's face, but to Mr. Blyth's watch-chain. There hung the bright little key of the painter's bureau, dangling jauntily to and fro over his waistcoat-pocket. As Mat's right foot hoisted him up slowly, the key swung temptingly backward and forward between them. "Come take me! come take me!" it seemed to say as Mr. Marksman's eyes fixed greedily on it every time it dangled toward him.

"Wonderful!—wonderful!" cried Mr. Blyth, looking excessively relieved when he found himself safely set down on the floor again.

"That's nothing to some of the things he can do," said Zack. "If you don't mind laying stomach downward on the carpet, and you think the waistband of your trousers would stand it, he'll take you up in his teeth."

"Thank you, Zack, I'm perfectly satis-



fed without carrying the thing any further," rejoined Valentine, returning in a great hurry to the table.

"The grog's getting cold," grumbled Mat. "Do you find it slip down easy now?" he continued, handing the "squaw's mixture" quite politely to Mr. Blyth.

"Delicious," answered Valentine, drinking this time almost with the boldness of Zack himself. "Now it's cooler, one tastes the sugar. Whenever I've tried to drink regular grog, I have never been able to get people to give it me sweet enough. The delicious part of this is, that there's plenty of sugar in it. And, besides, it has the merit (which real grog has not) of being harmless. It tastes strong to me, to be sure" (sipping from the glass as he spoke); "but then I'm not used to spirits. After what you say, however, of course it must be harmless—quite harmless, I have no doubt." Here he sipped again, pretty freely this time, by way of convincing himself of the perfect harmlessness of the "squaw's mixture."

While Mr. Blyth had been speaking, Mr. Marksman's hands had been gradually stealing down deeper and deeper into the pockets of his trousers, until his finger and thumb, and a certain plastic substance hidden away in the left-hand pocket, came gently into contact, just as Valentine left off speaking. "Let's have another toast," cried Mat, quite briskly, the instant the last word was out of his guest's mouth. "Come on, one of you, and give us another toast," he reiterated, with a roar of barbarous joviality, taking up his glass in his right hand, and keeping his left still in his pocket.

"Give you another toast, you noisy old savage!" repeated Zack, "I'll give you *five*, all at once! Mr. Blyth, Mrs. Blyth, Madonna, 'Columbus,' and the 'Golden Age'—three excellent people and two glorious pictures: let's add them together, in a friendly way, and drink long life and success to them all in a lump," shouted the young gentleman, making perilously rapid progress through his second glass of grog as he spoke.

"Do you know, I'm afraid I must change to some other place, if you have no objection," said Mr. Blyth, after he had duly honored the composite toast just proposed. "The fire here, behind me, is getting rather too—"

"Change along with me," said Mat. "I don't mind heat, nor cold neither, for the matter of that."

Valentine accepted this offer with great gratitude. "By-the-by, Zack," said he—placing himself comfortably in his host's chair, between the table and the wall—"I was going to ask a favor of our excellent friend here, when you suggested that wonderful and matchless trial of strength which

we have just had. You have been of such inestimable assistance to me already, my dear sir," he continued, turning toward Mat, with all his natural cordiality of disposition now fully developed under the fostering influence of the "squaw's mixture"—"you have laid me under such an inexpressible obligation in saving my picture from destruction, that I feel some hesitation at asking you to do me another favor so soon; but really—"

"I wish you could make up your mind to say what you want in plain words," interrupted Mat. "I'm one of your rough handed, thick-headed sort, I am. I ain' gentleman enough to understand palaver. It don't do me no good: it only worrits me into a perspiration." And Mr. Marksman, shaking down his shirt-sleeve, drew it several times across his forehead, as a proof of the truth of his last assertion.

"Quite right! quite right!" cried Mr. Blyth, patting him on the shoulder in the most friendly manner imaginable. "In plain words, then, when I mentioned, just now, how much I admired your arms in an artistic point of view, I was only paying the way for asking you to let me make a study of them, in black and white, for the arms in a large picture that I mean to paint later in the year. My classical figure composition, you know, Zack—you have seen the sketch—Hercules bringing to King Eurystheus the Erymanthian boar—a glorious subject; and our friend's arms, and indeed his chest, too, if he would kindly consent to sit for it, would make the very studies I most want for Hercules."

"What the devil is he driving at?" asked Mat, addressing himself to young Thorpe after staring at Valentine for a moment or two in a state of speechless amazement.

"He wants to draw your arms, of course you will be only too happy to let him, you can't understand anything about it now, but you will when you begin to sit, pass the cigars, thank Blyth for meaning to make a Hercules of you, and tell him you'll come to the painting-room whenever he likes," answered Zack, joining his sentences together in his most off-hand manner, all in a breath.

"What painting-room? where is it?" asked Mat, still in a densely-stupefied condition.

"My painting-room," replied Valentine—"where you saw the pictures, and saved 'Columbus,' yesterday."

Mat considered for a moment—then suddenly brightened up, and began to look quite intelligent again. "I'll come," he said, "as soon as you like—the sooner the better," clapping his fist emphatically on the table, and drinking to Valentine with his heartiest nod.

"That's a worthy, good-natured fellow!"

cried Mr. Blyth, drinking to Mat in return, with grateful enthusiasm. "The sooner the better, as you say. Come to-morrow evening."

"All right—to-morrow evening," assented Mr. Marksman. His left hand, as he spoke, began to work, stealthily, round and round in his pocket, moulding into all sorts of strange shapes that plastic substance which had lain hidden there ever since his shopping-expedition in the morning.

"I should have asked you to come in the daytime," continued Valentine; "but, as you know, Zack, I have the 'Golden Age' to varnish, and one or two little things to alter in the lower part of 'Columbus'—and, then, by the end of the week, I must leave home to do those portraits in the country which I told you of, and which are wanted before I thought they would be. I might put off making the study from our friend's arms till I get back, certainly; but then, I am not sure, to a day, when that will be; and I always like to catch a good opportunity the moment I can get it, and—and, in short, if it's convenient, let us begin by all means to-morrow evening. You will come with our friend, of course, Zack? I dare say I shall have the order for you to study at the British Museum, by to-morrow. As for the private drawing academy—"

"No offence, but I can't stand seeing you stirring up them grounds in the bottom of your glass any longer," Mat broke in here; taking away Mr. Blyth's tumbler as he spoke, throwing the sediment of sugar, the lemon-pips, and the little liquor left to cover them, into the grate behind; and then hospitably devoting himself to the concoction of a second supply of that palatable and innocuous beverage, the "squaw's mixture."

"Half a glass," cried Mr. Blyth, "weak—remember my wretched head for drinking, and pray make it weak!"

As he said this, the clock of the neighbouring parish-church struck.

"Only nine," exclaimed Zack, referring ostentatiously to the watch which he had taken out of pawn the day before. "Pass the rum, Mat, as soon as you've done with it—put the kettle on to boil—and now, my lads, we'll begin spending the evening in earnest!"

\* \* \* \* \*

If any fourth gentleman had been present to assist in "spending the evening," as Zack chose to phrase it, at the small social *soirée* held by Mr. Marksman and Mr. Thorpe the younger, at their apartments in Kirk street—and if that gentleman had deserted the festive board as the clock struck nine—had walked about the streets to enjoy himself in the fresh air—and had then, as the clock struck ten, returned to the society of his convivial companions, he would most assuredly have been taken by surprise, unless

his temperament were of the most phlegmatic kind, on beholding the singular change which the lapse of one hour had been sufficient to produce in the manners and conversation of Mr. Valentine Blyth.

It might have been that the worthy and simple-hearted gentleman had been unduly stimulated by the reek of hot grog, which, in harmonious association with a heavy mist of tobacco-smoke, now filled the room; or it might have been that the second brew of the "squaw's mixture" had exceeded half a glassful in quantity, had not been diluted to the requisite weakness, and had consequently got into his head: but, whatever the exciting cause might be, the alteration that had taken place since nine o'clock, in his voice, looks, and manners, was remarkable enough to be of the nature of a moral phenomenon. He now talked incessantly about nothing but the fine arts; he differed with both his companions, and loftily insisted on his own superior sagacity, whenever either of them ventured to speak a word; he was by turns as noisy as Zack, and as gruff as Mat; his hair was crumpled down over his forehead, his eyes were dimmed, his shirt-collar was turned rakishly over his cravat: in short, he was not the genuine Valentine Blyth at all—he was only a tipsy counterfeit of him.

As for young Thorpe, any slight steadiness of brain which he might naturally possess, he had long since parted with, as a matter of course, for the rest of the evening. He was, just now, in a highly variable condition of temper—being, at one moment, more oppressively noisy and rackety than usual, and appearing, at another, to plunge suddenly into the lowest depths of the deepest imaginable revery.

Mr. Marksman alone remained unchanged. There he sat, reckless of the blazing fire behind him, still with that left hand of his dropping stealthily every now and then into his pocket; smoking, drinking, and staring at his two companions, just as gruffly self-possessed as ever.

"There's ten," muttered Mat, as the clock struck. "I said we should be getting jolly by ten. So we are."

Zack nodded his head solemnly, and stared hard at one of the empty bottles on the floor, which had rolled out from the temporary storeroom under the table. He was immersed in another of his profoundly thoughtful fits just then—his sixth within the last half-hour.

"Hold your tongues, both of you!" cried Mr. Blyth. "I insist on clearing up that disputed point whether painters are not just as hardy and strong as other men. I'm a painter myself, and I say they are. I'll agree with you in everything else, for you're the two best fellows in the world; but if you say they're not, why then all I say is,



be quiet and look at me! We painters are the gods of the earth; you may laugh, but we are. You may talk to me, by the hour together, about great generals and prime ministers—I mention the glorious names of Michael Angelo and Raphael, and down goes your argument directly. When Michael Angelo's nose was broken, do you think he minded it? Look in his life, and see if he did—that's all! Ha! ha! My painting-room is forty feet long (now this is an important proof). While I was painting 'Columbus' and the 'Golden Age,' one was at one end—north; and the other at the other—south. Very good. I walked backward and forward between these two pictures incessantly; and never sat down all day long. This is a fact, and the proof is, that I worked on both of them at once. A touch on 'Columbus'—a walk into the middle of the room to look at the effect—turn round—walk up to the 'Golden Age' opposite—a touch on the 'Golden Age'—another walk into the middle of the room to look at the effect—another turn round—and back again to 'Columbus.' Fifteen miles a day of studio-exercise, according to the calculation of a friend of mine; and including the number of times I had to go up and down my portable wooden steps to get at the top parts of 'Columbus.' Isn't a man hardy and strong who can stand that? Strong? Ha! ha! Just feel my legs, Zack. Are my calves hard and muscular, or are they not?"

Here Mr. Blyth, rapping young Thorpe smartly on the head with his spoon, tried to skip out of his chair as nimbly as usual; but only succeeded in floundering awkwardly into an upright position, after he had knocked down his plate with all the greasy remains of the liver and bacon on it. Zack woke up from his muddled meditation, with a start; and, under pretence of obeying his friend's injunction, pinched Valentine's leg with such vigorous malice, that the painter fairly screamed again under the infliction. All this time, Mr. Marksman sat immovably serene in his place next to the fire. He just quietly kicked Mr. Blyth's broken plate, with the scraps of liver and bacon, and the knife and fork that had fallen with them, into the temporary storeroom under the table—and then went on smoking as composedly as ever.

"Your legs, indeed!" cried Zack, pushing Valentine back into his chair again. "Hide them under the table directly, or I shall be seriously disgusted with you. I say, Mat, if you want to know why Blyth always wears such infernally tight trousers, I can tell you—he's actually proud of his legs!"

"No!" shouted Valentine, striking his fist quite ferociously on the table. "It's my ideas of costume that I'm proud of, because they're in advance of the age. As an

artist, I stick by the eternal principles of taste, which are that the dress must follow the lines of the human form. I told Trimbo, my tailor, from the first. I wouldn't have my legs put into a couple of loose cloth bags. I said, 'I don't care for fashions and I won't deal with you unless you follow my form.' I drew him diagrams, I taught him the anatomy of the human leg, I made him reflect, and what is the consequence! Trimbo is one of the most extraordinary characters I know. He's the only man in England who can fit me properly with a pair of trousers—and even *he* can't make them except when he's drunk."

"Oh-h-h! What an incredibly interesting anecdote!" exclaimed Zack, with a groan of derision.

"It's true," cried Mr. Blyth. "Be quiet, and I'll prove it. Trimbo dines in the middle of the day. He's generally sober and stupid before dinner: he's always drunk and intelligent after dinner. Wait! I'm coming to the point. When he brought home my last pair of trousers but four, they bagged at the knees, and there was a crease a foot long over one of the hips. 'Mr. Trimbo,' says I, 'what's the meaning of this?' 'Sir,' says he, 'I'm above any low-lived notions of deceiving you. That's the first pair of trousers I ever ventured to cut out for you before I'd had my dinner; and the long and short of it is, I've messed 'em. If you'll only look over the error in judgment this once, sir, I promise faithfully that it shall never occur again.' Of course, I looked over the error in judgment; and what was the consequence? it never did occur again. Now I should like to know what anybody has got to say to that?"

As Valentine ceased, Mr. Marksman gently pushed toward him another glass of the "squaw's mixture," quietly concocted while he had been talking. The effect on him of this hospitable action proved to be singularly soothing and beneficial. He had been getting gradually more and more disputatious with Zack for the last ten minutes; but the moment the steaming glass touched his hand, it seemed to change his mood with the most magical celerity. As he looked down at it, and felt the fragrant rum steaming softly into his nostrils, his face expanded with the most genial and benevolent of smiles. While his left hand unsteadily conveyed the tumbler to his lips, his right reached across the table and fraternally extended itself to Mat. "My dear friend," said Mr. Blyth affectionately, turning away from Zack as he set his glass down again, and apparently forgetting on a sudden that there was such a person as young Thorpe in the room—"my dear friend, how kind you are! Pray how do you make the 'squaw's mixture'?"

"He's told you already!" said Zack

throwing a piece of lemon-peel at Valentine's face.

"He's told me already," echoed Mr. Blyth, in the most mellifluous of voices, taking no more notice of the lemon-peel than he took of young Thorpe.

"I say, Mat, leave off smoking, and be hanged to you," said Zack. "Tell us something. Bowl away at once with one of your tremendous stories, or Blyth will be bragging again, before we can stop him, about his rickety old legs and Trimbo the tailor. Talk, man! Tell us your crack story of how you lost your scalp."

"Of how you lost your scalp—eh?" repeated Valentine in his most melodious tones, drinking again, leaning back till his head rested against the wall, and still not taking the smallest notice of Zack.

Mat laid down his pipe, and for a moment looked very attentively at Mr. Blyth—then, with the most unprecedented readiness and docility, began his story at once, without requiring another word of persuasion. Young Thorpe prepared to listen to it in perfect comfort by turning himself sideways to the table (so that his back was toward Valentine), and luxuriously stretching his great legs out to their full length on the floor.

Mr. Marksman was in general the very reverse of tedious when he related any experiences of his own; but on this particular occasion he seemed strangely bent on letting his narrative ooze out drowsily to the most interminable length. Instead of adhering to the abridged account of his terrible adventure, which he had given Zack when they first talked together on Blackfriars bridge, he now dwelt on all the minutest particulars of the murderous chase that had so nearly cost him his life, enumerating them one after the other in the same heavy droning voice which never changed its tone in the slightest degree as he went on. After about ten minutes drowsy endurance of the narrative-infliction which he had himself provoked, young Thorpe was just beginning to feel a sensation of utter oblivion stealing over him, when a sound of lusty snoring close at his back startled him into instant wakefulness. He looked round. There was Mr. Blyth placidly and profoundly asleep, with his mouth wide open and his head resting against the wall.

"Stop!" whispered Mat, as Zack seized on a half-squeezed lemon and took aim at Valentine's mouth. "Don't wake him yet. Are you game for some oysters?"

"Game? I should think I was," returned young Thorpe. "Give us a dish—Sally's in bed by this time—I'll go and fetch them from over the way. But, I say, d—n it, I must have one shy."

"Get the oysters first," said Mat, producing from the cupboard behind him a large yellow pie-dish. "Let's wake him

up with a cold *native* flopped into his mouth. Come on! I'll see you down-stairs, and leave the candle on the landing, and the door on the jar, so as you can get in quietly. Steady, young un! and mind the dish when you cross the road." With these words Mr. Marksman dismissed Zack from the street-door to the oyster-shop; and then returned immediately to his guest up-stairs.

Valentine was still fast asleep and snoring vehemently. Mat's hand descended again into his pocket, reappearing, however, quickly enough on this occasion, with the piece of wax which he had purchased that morning. Steadying his arms coolly on the table, he detached the little chain which held the key of Mr. Blyth's bureau, from the watchguard to which it was fastened, took off on his wax a perfect impression of the whole key from the pipe to the handle, attached it again to the sleeper's watchguard, pared away the rough ends of the piece of wax till it fitted into an old tin tobacco-box which he took from the chimney-piece, pocketed this box, and then quietly resumed his original place at the table.

"Now," said Mat, looking at the unconscious Mr. Blyth, after he had lit his pipe again; "now, painter-man! wake up as soon as you like."

It was not long before Zack returned. A violent bang of the street-door announced his entry into the passage—a confused clattering and stumbling marked his progress up-stairs—a shrill crash, a heavy thump, and a shout of laughter indicated his arrival on the landing. Mat ran out directly, and found him prostrate on the floor, with the yellow pie-dish in halves at the bottom of the stairs, and dozens of oyster-shells scattered about him in every direction.

"Hurt?" inquired Mat, pulling him up by the collar, and dragging him into the room.

"Not a bit of it," answered Zack, laughing as heartily as if his fall had been an excellent joke. "I've woke Blyth, though (worse luck!) and spoilt our fun with the cold *native*, haven't I? O Lord! how he stares!"

Valentine certainly did stare. He was standing up, leaning against the wall, and looking about him in a wofully dazed condition. Either his nap, or the alarming manner in which he had been awakened from it, had produced a decided change for the worse in him. As he slowly recovered what little sense he had left to make use of, all his talkativeness and cordiality seemed to desert him. He shook his head mournfully; refused to eat or drink anything; said with sullen solemnity, that his digestion was "a perfect wreck in consequence of his keeping drunken society;" and insisted on going home directly, in



pite of everything that Zack could say to him. The landlord, who had been brought from his shop below by the noise, and who thought it very desirable to take the first opportunity that offered of breaking up the party before any more grog was consumed, officiously ran down-stairs, and called a cab—the result of this manoeuvre proving in the sequel to be what the tobaccoist desired. The moment the sound of wheels was heard at the door, Mr. Blyth clamored peremptorily for his hat and coat; and, after some little demur, was at last helped into the cab in the most friendly and attentive manner by Mr. Marksman himself.

"Just see the lights out up-stairs, and the young un in bed, will ye?" said Mat to his landlord, as they stood together on the doorstep. "I'm going to blow some of the smoke out of me by taking a turn in the fresh air."

He walked away briskly, as he said the last words, but when he got to the end of the street, instead of proceeding northward toward the country, and the cool night-breeze that was blowing from it, he perversely turned southward toward the most filthy little lanes and courts in the whole neighborhood; into which the merciful fresh air had tried hard to penetrate for many a long year past, and had been regu- larly refused admission, except under the poisonous passports of the presiding district authority—KING DIRT.

Stepping along at a rapid pace, Mr. Marksman directed his course toward that particular row of small and vile houses which he had already visited early in the day, and stopped, as before, at the second-hand iron shop. It was shut up for the night; but a dim light, as of one farthing candle, glimmered through the circular holes in the tops of the shutters; and when Mat knocked at the door with his knuckles, it was opened immediately by the same squalid, humpbacked shopman with whom he had conferred in the morning.

"Got it?" asked the hunchback in a cracked querulous voice, the moment the door was ajar.

"All right," answered Mat in his gruffest bass tones, handing to the little man the tin tobacco-box.

"We said to-morrow evening, didn't we?" continued the squalid shopman.

"Not later than six," added Mat.

"Not later than six," repeated the other, shutting the door softly as Mr. Marksman walked away—northward this time—to seek the fresh air in good earnest.

## CHAPTER XI.

## THE GARDEN-DOO.

"Hit or miss, I'll chance it to-night." These words were the first that issued from Mat's lips on the morning after Mr. Blyth's visit, as he stood alone amid the festive relics of the past evening, in the front room at Kirk street. "To-night," he repeated to himself, as he pulled off his coat and prepared to make his toilette for the day in a pail of cold water, with the assistance of a short bar of wholesome yellow soap.

Though it was still early, his mind had been employed for some hours past in considering how the second and only difficulty, which now stood between him and the possession of the hair bracelet, might best be overcome. Having already procured the first requisite for executing his design, how was he next to profit by what he had gained? Knowing that the false key would be placed in his hands that evening, how was he to open Mr. Blyth's bureau without risking discovery by the owner, or by some other person in the house?

To this important question he had as yet found no better answer than was involved in the words he had just whispered to himself, while preparing for his morning ablutions. Whether he succeeded, or whether he failed, he was determined to make the attempt on the bureau that evening. As for any definite plan, by which to guide himself, he was desperately resigned to trust for the discovery of it to the first lucky chance which might be brought about by the events of the day. "I should like, though, to have one good look by daylight round that place they call the painting room," thought Mat, still pondering inveterately on the only difficulty which now remained for him to encounter, even while he was plunging his face into two handfuls of hissing soap-suds.

He was still vigorously engaged over the pail of cold water, when a loud yawn, which died away gradually into a dreary howl, sounded from the next room, and announced that Zack was awake. In another minute the young gentleman appeared gloomily in his night-gown at the folding doors by which the two rooms communicated. His eyes looked red-rimmed and blinking, his cheeks mottled and sodden, his hair tangled and dirty. He had one hand to his forehead, and groaning with the corners of his mouth lamentably drawn down, exhibited a shocking and salutary picture of the consequences of excessive conviviality.

"O Lord, Mat!" he moaned, "my head's coming in two."

"Souse it in a pail of cold water, and walk off what you can't get rid of, after that, along with me," suggested his friend

Zack wisely took this advice. As they left Kirk street for their walk, Mat managed that they should shape their course so as to pass Valentine's house on their way to the fields. As he had anticipated, young Thorpe proposed to call in for a minute, to see how Mr. Blyth was after the festivities of the past night, and to ascertain if he still remained in the same mind about making the drawing of Mr. Marksman's arms that evening.

"I suspect you didn't brew the 'squaw's mixture' half as weak as you told us you did," said Zack slyly, when they rang at the bell. "It wasn't a bad joke for once in a way. But, really, Blyth is such a good kind-hearted fellow, it seems too bad—in short, don't let's do it next time, Mat, that's all?"

Mr. Marksman gruffly repudiated the slightest intention of deceiving their guest as to the strength of the liquor he had drunk. They went into the painting-room, and found Mr. Blyth there, pale and penitent, but manfully preparing to varnish the Golden Age, with a very trembling hand, and a very headachy contraction of the eyebrows.

"Ah, Zack, Zack! I ought to lecture you about last night," said Valentine; "but I have no right to say a word, for I was much the worse of the two. I'm wretchedly ill this morning, which is just what I deserve; and heartily ashamed of myself, which is only what I ought to be. Just look at my hand! It's all in a tremble like an old man's. Not a thimbleful of spirits shall ever pass my lips again. I'll stick to lemonade and tea for the rest of my life. No more 'squaw's mixture' for me! Not, my dear sir," continued Valentine, addressing Mr. Marksman, who had been quietly stealing a glance or two at the bureau, while the painter was speaking to young Thorpe, "Not, my dear sir, that I think of blaming you, or doubt for a moment that the drink you kindly mixed for me would have been considered quite weak and harmless by people with stronger heads than mine. It was all my own fault, my own want of proper thoughtfulness and caution. If I misconducted myself last night, as I am afraid I did, pray make allowances—"

"Nonsense!" cried Zack, seeing that Mat was beginning to fidget away from Valentine, instead of returning an answer. "Nonsense! you were glorious company. We were three choice spirits, and you were number one of the social trio. Away with melancholy! Let's have a temperance orgy to-night to make amends for yesterday. Do you still keep in the same mind about drawing Mat's arms? He will be delighted to come, and so shall I; and we'll all get virtuously uproarious this time, on nothing but toast-and-water and tea."

"Of course I keep in the same mind," returned Mr. Blyth. I had my senses about me, at any rate, when I invited you and your friend here to-night. Not that I shall be able to do much, I am afraid, in the way of drawing, for a letter has come this morning to hurry me into the country. Another portrait-job has turned up, and I shall have to start to-morrow. It's very inconvenient, and I never in my life felt so unwilling to leave home as I do this time. I'm almost uneasy about it—I can't tell why—but I am. However, there is money to be made, so I suppose I must go."

"Why?" asked Zack, "why should you go if you don't like it? You don't want money."

"Ah, but I do," said Valentine. "Hush! don't say a word to Lavinie just yet" (here he sank his voice to a whisper). "I've ordered that chased-silver vase that I told you about. It's just the sort of pattern she is sure to like, and it will look lovely in her room."

"How much?" asked young Thorpe in a confidential whisper.

"Awful, Zack, thirty guineas!" replied Mr. Blyth under his breath. "Two or three portraits will cover it—that's one comfort. I've got four in prospect if I accept this job. So you see I must go away from home, whether I like it or not; or run in debt, which I haven't the courage to do. Never mind! I can get in the outline of your friend's arms to-night, and leave the rest to be done when I come back. Shall I take that sketch down for you, my dear sir, to look at close?" continued Valentine, suddenly raising his voice, and addressing himself to Mr. Marksman. "I venture to think it one of my most conscientious studies from actual nature."

While Mr. Blyth and Zack had been whispering together, Mat had walked away from them quietly toward one end of the room, and was now standing close to a door, lined inside with sheet iron, having bolts at top and bottom, and leading down a flight of steps from the studio into the back-garden. Above this door hung a large chalk sketch of an old five-barred gate, being the identical study from nature, which, as Valentine imagined, was at that moment the special object of interest to Mat.

"No, no! don't trouble to get the sketch now," said Zack, once more answering for his friend. "We are going out to get freshened up by a long walk, and can't stop. Suppose you come with us, Blyth?"

No. Valentine could not leave his painting-room for the next two hours at least.

"You had better," urged Zack. "Nothing like exercise, when a man is as seedy as you are. Or, stop! if you won't come for a walk, what do you say to sweeping the cobwebs out of your brains with a little



leap-frog in the garden? I have let you drop your practice for I don't know how long. Come on! Mat's stiff at his jumping, but he gives a famous back." Saying this, young Thorpe ran to the end of the room, and began to unlock the garden-door.

"No, no!" exclaimed Mr. Blyth. "No leap-frog to-day. I can't stand violent exercise when I've got a headache. Go and take your walk, and come here at seven to-night (nobody but ourselves). I shall be all right again by that time, I hope, and delighted to see you both."

"Now, then, Mat," cried Zack, "what on earth are you staring at—the garden-door, or the sketch of the five-barred gate?"

"The picter, in course," answered Mr. Marksman with very unusual quickness and irritability.

"It shall be taken down for you to look at close to-night," said Mr. Blyth, delighted by the impression which the five-barred gate seemed to have produced on Mat.

"How are the ladies?" asked Zack, as he and his friend left the studio. "I say," he added in a whisper to Valentine, "does Mrs. Blyth suspect anything about the 'squaw's mixture'?"

"Suspect?" repeated Valentine in amazement. "Of course, I told her all about it the first thing this morning."

"I shall catch it when I go up-stairs to-night," thought Zack, wincing under this last new proof of the perfectly frank terms on which the painter and his wife lived together.

On leaving Mr. Blyth's, young Thorpe and his companion turned down a lane partially built over, which led past Valentine's back-garden wall. This was their nearest way to the fields and to the high-road into the country beyond. Before they had taken six steps down the lane, Mat, who had been incomprehensibly stolid and taciturn inside the house, became just as incomprehensibly curious and talkative all on a sudden outside it.

In the first place, he insisted on mounting some planks lying under Valentine's wall (to be used for the new houses that were being built in the lane), and peeping over to see what sort of a garden the painter had. Zack summarily pulled him down from his elevation by the coat-tails, but not before his quick eye had travelled over the garden, had ascended the steps leading from it to the studio, and had risen above them as high as the brass handle of the door by which they were approached from the painting-room.

In the second place, when he had been prevailed on to start fairly for the walk, Mat began to ask questions with the same pertinacious inquisitiveness which he had already displayed on the day of the picture-show. He set out with wanting to know

whether there were to be any strange visitors at Mr. Blyth's that evening; and then, on being reminded that Valentine had expressly said at parting, "Nobody but ourselves," asked if they were likely to see the painter's wife down-stairs. After this inquiry had of necessity been answered in the negative, he went on to a third question, and desired to know whether "the young woman" (as he persisted in calling Madonna) might be expected to stay up-stairs with Mrs. Blyth, or to show herself occasionally in the painting-room.

This question, as a matter of course, set Zack tormenting his companion with a repetition of the many bad jokes he had made already about Mat's devouring passion for Madonna. Mr. Marksman, as usual, let him go on talking nonsense to his heart's content, and managed at last by patience and perseverance to get the reply that he wanted to his inquiry. Young Thorpe, during a short, lucid interval of common sense, informed him that Madonna, except under extraordinary circumstances, never came down into the studio in the evening, when Mr. Blyth had company there. "But cheer up, Cupid," added Zack, relapsing into nonsense again; "you sha'n't pine after her unpitied, if I can help it. I shall be going up-stairs to see Mrs. Blyth; and I'll manage to bring her down somehow into the painting-room. You shall have your eyes dazzled, and your leathery old heart bored through and through; and then you will be perfectly qualified in every respect to figure on the long and honorable list of Madonna's admirers."

Mat took no notice whatever of this last absurd speech, but immediately proceeded with his questions.

He now wanted to know at what time Mr. Blyth and his family were accustomed to go to bed; and explained, when Zack expressed astonishment at the inquiry, that he had only asked this question in order to find out the hour at which it would be proper to take leave of their host that night. On hearing this, young Thorpe answered as readily and carelessly as usual, that the painter's family were early people, who went to bed before eleven o'clock; adding that it was, of course, particularly necessary to leave the studio in good time on the occasion referred to, because Valentine would most probably start for the country next day, by one of the morning trains.

Mat's next question was preceded by a silence of a few minutes. Possibly he was thinking in what terms he might best put it. If this were the case, he certainly decided on using the briefest possible form of expression, for when he spoke again, he just asked, in so many words, what sort of a woman the painter's wife was.

Zack characteristically answered the inquiry by a torrent of his most superlative

eulogies on Mrs. Blyth; and then, passing from the lady herself to the chamber that she inhabited, wound up with a magnificent and exaggerated description of the splendor of her room.

Mat listened to him attentively; then said he supposed Mrs. Blyth must be fond of curiosities, and all sorts of "knick-knack things from foreign parts." Young Thorpe not only answered the question in the affirmative, but added, as a private expression of his own opinion, that he believed these said curiosities and "knick-knacks" had helped, in their way, to keep her alive, by keeping her amused. From this, he digressed to a long narrative of poor Mrs. Blyth's first illness; and having exhausted that sad subject at last, ended by calling on Mr. Marksman to change the conversation to some less mournful topic.

But just at this point, it seemed that Mat was perversely determined to lapse into another silent fit. He not only made no attempt to change the conversation, but entirely ceased asking questions; and, indeed, hardly uttered another word of any kind, good or bad. Zack, after vainly trying to rally him into talking, lit a cigar in despair, and the two walked on together silently—Mr. Marksman having his hands in his pockets, keeping his eyes bent on the ground, and altogether burying himself, as it were, from the outer world, in the innermost recesses of a deep, brown study.

As they returned, and got near Kirk street, Mat gradually began to talk again, but only on indifferent subjects—asking no more questions about Mr. Blyth, or any one else. They arrived at their lodgings at half-past five o'clock. Zack went into the bedroom to wash his hands. While he was thus engaged, Mr. Marksman opened that leather bag of his which has been already described as lying in the corner with the bearskins, and, taking out the feather-fan and the Indian tobacco-pouch, wrapped them up separately in paper. Having done this, he called to Zack, and, saying that he was about to step over to the shaving-shop to get his face scraped clean before going to Mr. Blyth's, left the house with his two packages in his hand.

"If the worst comes to the worst, I'll chance it to-night with the garden-door," said Mat to himself, as he took the first turning that led toward the second-hand iron-shop. "This will do to get rid of the painter-man with. And this will send Zack after him," he added, putting first the fan and then the tobacco-pouch into separate pockets of his coat. A cunning smile hovered about his lips for a moment, as he disposed of his two packages in this manner; but it passed away again almost immediately, and was succeeded by a curious contraction and twitching of the upper part of

his face. He began muttering once again that name of "Mary," which had been so often on his lips lately; and quickened his pace mechanically, as it was always his habit to do when anything vexed or disturbed him.

When he reached the shop, the hunchback was at the door with the tin tobacco-box in his hand. On this occasion, not a single word was exchanged between the two. The squalid shopman, as the customer approached, rattled something triumphantly inside the box, and then handed it to Mat; and Mat put his finger and thumb into his waistcoat-pocket, winked, nodded, and handed some money to the squalid shopman. The brief ceremony of giving and taking thus completed, these two originals turned away from each other without a word of farewell—the hunchback returning to his counter, and Mr. Marksman proceeding to the shaving-shop.

Mat opened the box for an instant, on his way to the barber's; and, taking out the false key (which, though made of baser metal, was almost as bright as the original), put it carefully into his waistcoat-pocket. He then stopped at an oil and candle shop, and bought a wax-taper and a box of matches. "The garden-door's safest: I'll chance it with the garden-door," thought Mr. Marksman, as he sat down in the shaving-shop chair, and ordered the barber to operate on his chin.

Punctually at seven o'clock Mr. Blyth' visitors rang at his bell. As they were shown into the hall, Mat whispered to Zack—"This is where that old woman laid hold on you, and made such a fool of herself—ain't it?"—"Yes," returned young Thorpe in his lowest tones; "but, I say, don't tell Blyth about my taking her off the other night. He's uncommonly fond of old Mother Peckover, and might run rusty with me, if he knew I'd been making fun of her to you."

When they entered the studio, they found Valentine all ready for them, with his drawing-board at his side, and his cartoon-sketch for the proposed new picture of Hercules bringing to King Eurystheus the Erymanthian boar, lying rolled up at his feet. He said he had got rid of his headache, and felt perfectly well now; but Zack observed that he was not in his usual good spirits. Mat, on his side, observed nothing but the garden-door, toward which he lounged carelessly as soon as the first salutations were over.

"This way, my dear sir," said Valentine, walking after him. "I've taken down the drawing you were so good as to admire this morning, as I said I would. Here it is on this painting-stand, if you would like to look at it."

Mat, whose first glance at the garden



door had assured him that it was bolted and locked for the night, wheeled round immediately, and, to Mr. Blyth's great delight, inspected the sketch of the old five-barred gate with the most extraordinary and flattering attention. "Wants doing up—don't it?" said Mat, referring to the picturesquely-ruinous original of the gate represented. "Yes, indeed," answered Valentine, thinking he spoke of the creased and ragged condition of the paper on which the sketch was made; "a morsel of paste and a sheet of fresh paper to stretch it on, would make quite another thing of it." Mat stared. "Paste and paper for a five-barred gate? A nice carpenter *you* would make!" he felt inclined to say. Zack, however, spoke at that moment: so he left the sketch, and wisely held his tongue.

"Now, then, Mat, strip to your chest, and put your arms in any position Blyth tells you. Remember you are going to be drawn as Hercules; and mind you look as if you were bringing the Erymanthian boar to King Eurystheus, for the rest of the evening," said young Thorpe, composedly warming himself at the fire.

While Mr. Marksman awkwardly, and with many expressions of astonishment at the strange piece of service required from him by his host, divested himself of his upper garments, Valentine unrolled on the floor the paper cartoon of his classical composition, and, having refreshed his memory from it, put Mat forthwith into the position of Hercules, with a chair to hold instead of an Erymanthian boar, and Zack to look at as the only available representative of King Eurystheus. This done, Mr. Blyth wasted some little time, as usual, before he began to work, in looking for his drawing materials. In the course of his search over the littered studio-table, he accidentally laid his hand on two envelopes with enclosures, which, after examining the addresses, he gave immediately to young Thorpe.

"Here, Zack," said he, "these belong to you. Take them at once, and put them into your pocket; for if you leave them about in the painting-room, they are sure to be lost. The large envelope contains your permission to draw at the British Museum. The small one has a letter of introduction inside, presenting you, with my best recommendations, to my friend, Mr. Strather, a very pleasing artist, and the curator of the Little Bilge street drawing academy. You had better call to-morrow, before eleven. Mr. Strather will go with you to the museum, and show you how to begin, and will introduce you to the drawing academy the same evening. Pray, pray, Zack, be steady and careful. Remember all you have promised your mother and me, and show us that you are now really determined to study the art in good earnest."

Zack expressed great gratitude for his friend's kindness, pocketed the letters, and declared, with the utmost fervor of voice and manner, that he would repair all his past faults by unflagging future industry as a student of art. After a little longer delay, Valentine at last collected his drawing materials, and fairly began to work. As for Mat, he displayed from the first the most extraordinary and admirable steadiness as a model. His eyes might now and then stealthily wander away toward the garden-door, when Mr. Blyth was not looking at him, or glance round quickly at his coat, whenever Zack happened to move near the chair on which it hung; but his body hardly varied from the right position by a hair's breadth; he rarely wanted to rest, and he never complained of cold. In short, as Valentine enthusiastically declared, he was "a perfect jewel of a sitter, a model for Hercules whom it was a real privilege and pleasure to be able to draw from."

But while the work of the studio thus proceeded with all the smoothness and expedition that could be desired, the incidental conversation by no means kept pace with it. In spite of all that young Thorpe could say or do, the talk lagged more and more, and grew duller and duller. Valentine was evidently out of spirits, and "Hercules" had stolidly abandoned himself to the most inglorious and inveterate silence. At length Zack gave up all further effort to promote the sociability of the evening, and left the painting-room to go up-stairs and visit the ladies. Mat looked after him as he quitted the studio, and seemed about to speak—then, glancing aside at the bureau, checked himself suddenly, and did not utter a word.

Mr. Blyth's present depression of spirits was not entirely attributable to that unwillingness to leave home of which he had spoken in the morning to young Thorpe. He had a secret cause of uneasiness which he had not hinted at to Zack, and which happened to be intimately connected with the model whose herculean chest and arms he was now engaged in drawing. The plain fact was, that Mr. Blyth's tender conscience smote him sorely, when he remembered the perfect trust Mrs. Thorpe placed in his promised supervision over her son, and when he afterward reflected that he still knew as little of Zack's strange companion as Zack did himself. His visit to Kirk street undertaken for the express purpose of guarding the lad's best interests by definitely ascertaining who Mr. Marksman really was, had ended in—that he was now ashamed to dwell over, or even to call to mind. "Dear, dear me!" thought Mr. Blyth, while he worked away silently at the outline of his drawing, "how disgracefully imprudent and careless I have been! I have found out nothing, and inquired about noth-

ing—How could I? It seems so mean and ungrateful even to appear to suspect a man who saved my picture only the other day, and who is now actually engaged in doing me a very great service. And yet, I promised Mrs. Thorpe—I'm in a manner responsible for Zack—I ought to find out whether this very friendly, good-natured, and useful man, is fit to be trusted with him; and now he's out of the room, I might very well do it. Might?—I will!" And, acting immediately on this conscientious resolve, simple-hearted Mr. Blyth actually set himself to ask cunning Mr. Marksman, in delicate and circumlocutory terms, the important question of who he really was!

Mat was candid itself in answering all inquiries that related to his wanderings over the American continent. He confessed with the utmost frankness that he had been sent to sea, as a wild boy whom it was impossible to keep steady at home; and he quite readily admitted that he had not introduced himself to Zack under his real name. But at this point his communicativeness stopped. He did not quibble or prevaricate; he just bluntly and simply declared that he would tell nothing more than he had told already. "I said to the young 'un," concluded Mat, "when first we come together, 'I haven't heard the sound of my own name for better than twenty year past; and I don't care if I never hear it again.' That's what I said to *him*. That's what I say to *you*. I'm a rough 'un, I know; but I haven't broke out of prison, or cheated the gallows—"

"My dear sir," interposed Valentine, eagerly and alarmedly, "pray don't imagine any such offensive ideas ever entered my head! I might perhaps have thought that family troubles—" "That's it," Mat broke in quickly. "Family troubles. Drop it there; and you'll leave it right."

Upon this, Mr. Blyth very abruptly and confusedly changed the conversation, and began to talk about Zack, whose increasing taste for the nightly consumption of strong liquor in large quantities, the painter viewed with considerable apprehension. He would have expressed this in so many words to Mat; but certain remembrances connected with the "squaw's mixture," and its train of convivial consequences, tied his tongue. So he confined himself to speaking generally of young Thorpe's future prospects; and endeavored to impress on Mr. Marksman the necessity of using his great influence over the lad, so as to lead him into such steady courses as might end in making him, not only a successful artist, but also a respectable man. Mat listened to his host's discourse with every appearance of attention; but his eyes began, nevertheless, to twinkle impatiently as they still turned every now and then toward the garden-door; and, when it came to his turn to

speak, he asked some questions on the subject of successful artists and respectable men in general, which showed such dense ignorance of accepted social conventions and established social creeds, that Mr. Blyth found it perplexing in the last degree to meet them with any species of adequate reply. Indeed, considering Mat's capacity for making awkward inquiries, and Valentine's incapacity for defining abstract ideas, it was, perhaps, upon the whole, equally fortunate for both of them that their colloquy was interrupted, just as it was involving them in the most inextinguishable mutual bewilderment, by the return of young Thorpe to the studio.

Zack announced the approaching arrival of the supper-tray; and warned "Hercules" to let go of the Erymanthian boar, and cover up his neck and shoulders immediately, unless he wished to frighten the housemaid out of her wits. At this hint, Mr. Blyth laid aside his drawing-board, and Mr. Marksman put on his flannel waistcoat; not listening the while to one word of the many fervent expressions of gratitude addressed to him by the painter, but appearing to be in a violent hurry to array himself in his coat again. A soon as he had got it on, he put his hand in one of the pockets, and looked hard at Valentine—but just then the servant came in with the tray; upon which he turned round impatiently, and walked away once again to the lower end of the room.

When the door had closed on the departing house-maid, he returned to Mr. Blyth with the feather-fan in his hand; and saying, in his usual gruff, downright way, that he had heard from Zack of Mrs. Blyth's invalid condition, and of her fondness for curiosities, bluntly asked the painter if he thought his wife would like such a fan as that now produced. Valentine, who did not feel quite comfortable after the defeat he had suffered in trying to ascertain Mr. Marksman's origin, and who also naturally doubted the propriety of letting his wife accept a present from a man who was little better than a perfect stranger—hesitated, stammered, and tried to gain time by beginning to admire the fan. He was unceremoniously interrupted, however, by his queer visitor, before he could utter three consecutive words. "I got that for a woman in the old country, many a long year ago," said Mat, pressing the fan roughly into Mr. Blyth's hands. "When I come back, and thought for to give it her, she was dead and gone. There's not another woman in England as cares about me, or knows about me. If you're too proud to let your wife have the thing, throw it into the fire. I haven't got nobody to give it to; and I can't keep it by me, and won't keep it by me, no longer."



In the utterance of these words there was a certain rough pathos and bitter reference to past calamity which touched Valentine in one of his tender places. His generous instincts overcame his prudent reflections in a moment; and moved him, not merely to accept the present, but also to predict warmly that Mrs. Blyth would be delighted with it.

"Zack," said he, speaking in an undertone to young Thorpe, who had been listening to Mat's last speech, and observing his production of the fan, in silent curiosity and surprise, "Zack, I'll run up-stairs with the fan to Lavvie at once, so as not to seem careless about your friend's present. Mind you do the honors of the supper-table—such as it is!—with proper hospitality, while I am away."

Speaking these words, Mr. Blyth bustled out of the room as nimbly as usual. A minute or two after his departure, Mat put his hand into his pocket once more; mysteriously approached young Thorpe, and opened before him the paper containing the Indian tobacco-pouch, which was made of scarlet cloth, and was very prettily decorated with colored beads.

"Do you think the young woman would fancy this?" he said. "I'd have asked *him*" (referring by the last word to Valentine); "but he looked so queer at the feather-thing, and bolted in such a hurry—"

Here Zack, with a shout of laughter, interrupted him by snatching the pouch out of his hands; and began to quiz his friend more unmercifully than ever. For the first time, Mat seemed irritated by his bad jokes about courting a civilized young lady by means of a savage tobacco-pouch; and cut him short quite fiercely with a frown and an oath.

"Don't swear, Don Juan!" cried Zack with incorrigible levity. "I'll take it up to her; and, if Blyth will let her have it, I'll manage to get her down-stairs somehow. Oh, what a sight it will be to see the leathery old boy trying to make soft eyes at Madonna!" Saying this, young Thorpe ran laughing out of the room, with the scarlet pouch in his hand.

Mat listened intently till the sound of Zack's rapid footsteps died away up-stairs—then walked quickly and softly down the studio to the garden-door—gently unlocked it—gently drew the bolts back—gently opened it, and ascertained that it could also be opened from without, merely by turning the handle—then, quietly closing it again, left it, to all appearance, as fast for the night as before, provided no one went near enough, or had sufficiently sharp eyes, to observe that it was neither bolted nor locked.

"Now for the big chest!" thought Mat, taking the false key out of his pocket, and

hastening back to the bureau. "If Zack or the painter-man come down before I've time to get at the drawer inside, I've secured my second chance after they're all in bed with the garden-door."

He had the key in the lock as this thought passed through his mind. He was just about to turn it, when the sound of rapidly descending footsteps upon the stairs, struck on his quick ear.

"Too late!" muttered Mat. "I must chance it, after all, with the garden-door."

Putting the key into his pocket again, as he said this, he walked back to the fireplace. The moment after he got there, Mr. Blyth entered the studio.

"I am quite shocked that you should have been so unceremoniously left alone," said Valentine, whose naturally courteous nature prompted him to be just as scrupulously polite in his behavior to his rough guest, as if Mr. Marksman had been a civilized gentleman of the most refined feeling, and the most exalted rank. "I am so sorry you should have been left, through Zack's carelessness, without anybody to ask you to take a little supper," continued Valentine, turning to the table. "Mrs. Blyth, my dear sir (do take a sandwich!) desires me to express her best thanks for your very pretty present (that is the brandy in the bottle next to you). She admires the design (sponge-cake? Ah, you don't care about sweets), and thinks the color of the centre feathers—"

At this moment, the door opened, and Mr. Blyth, abruptly closing his lips, looked toward it with an expression of the blindest astonishment; for he beheld Madonna entering the painting-room in company with Zack.

Valentine had been persuaded to let the deaf and dumb girl accept the scarlet pouch, by his wife; but neither she nor Zack had said a word before him, up-stairs, about taking Madonna into the studio. The plain fact was that young Thorpe had warily abstained from mentioning the not over-wise project which he had now executed (and which he knew would have been summarily opposed by Mr. Blyth), until the painter had hastened away down-stairs, to pay the proper hospitable attentions to his guest. When he was well out of earshot, Zack confided to Mrs. Blyth the new freak in which he wanted to engage, predicted that it would produce a fresh fund of amusement at Mat's expense, declared that one of the ladies was bound in common gratitude to make a personal acknowledgment of the receipt of his friend's presents, and, signing unscrupulously to Madonna that she was wanted in the studio, to be presented to the "generous man who had given her the tobacco-pouch," took her out of the room without stopping to hear to the end the somewhat faint re-

monstrance by which his proposition was met. To confess the truth, Mrs. Blyth, seeing no great impropriety in the girl's being introduced to the stranger—while Valentine was present in the room; and having, moreover, a very strong curiosity to hear all she could about Zack's odd companion, was secretly anxious to ascertain what impressions Madonna would bring away of Mat's personal appearance and manners. Though she would not, on this account, say yes, to the somewhat venturesome proposal submitted to her; she did not, on the other hand, say no, as authoritatively as she might. And thus it was that Zack, by seizing his opportunity at the right moment, and exerting a little of that cool assurance in which he was never very deficient, now actually entered the painting-room in a glow of mischievous triumph, with Madonna on his arm.

Valentine gave him a look as he entered, which he found it convenient not to appear to see. The painter felt strongly inclined, at that moment, to send his adopted child up-stairs again directly; but he restrained himself out of a feeling of delicacy toward his guest—for Mr. Marksman had not only seen Madonna, but had advanced a step or two to meet her, the instant she came into the room.

Zack, feeling that he had displeased Mr. Blyth, and that he should be told so, at the first convenient opportunity, determined, in his reckless way, that it was now too late to draw back, and that he might just as well pursue his freak to the end, being now sure of receiving his merited reproof under any circumstances. Accordingly, he led Madonna up to Mat (who had suddenly and confusedly stopped, after advancing two or three steps from the supper-table), with the malicious intention of bewildering his uncultivated friend, by going through all the most elaborate ceremonies of a formal introduction. He was foiled in his purpose, though, unexpectedly enough, and at the very nick of time, by no less a person than Madonna herself.

Few social tests for analyzing female human nature can be more safely relied on than that which the moral investigator may easily apply, by observing how a woman conducts herself toward a man who shows symptoms of confusion on approaching her for the first time. If she has nothing at all in her, she awkwardly forgets the advantage of her sex, and grows more confused than he is; if she has nothing but brains in her, she cruelly abuses the advantage, and treats him with quiet contempt: if she has plenty of heart in her, she instinctively turns the advantage to its right use, and forthwith sets him at his ease by the timely charity of a word, or the mute encouragement of a look.

Now, Madonna, perceiving that Mr.

Marksman showed evident signs, on approaching her, of what appeared like confusion to her apprehension, quietly drew her arm out of Zack's, and, to his unmeasured astonishment, stepped forward in front of him—looked up brightly into the grim scarred face of Mat—dropped her usual courtesy, wrote a line hurriedly on her slate, then offered it to him with a smile and a nod, to read if he pleased, and to write on in return.

"By George!" exclaimed Zack, giving vent to his amazement; "she has taken to old Rough and Tough, and made him a prime favorite at first sight. Who would ever have thought it?"

Valentine was standing near but he did not appear to hear this speech. He was watching Mr. Marksman and Madonna closely and curiously. Accustomed as he was to the innocent candor with which the deaf and dumb girl always showed her approval or dislike of strangers at a first interview—as also to her apparent perversity in often displaying a decided liking for the very people whose looks and manners had been previously considered certain to displease her—he was now almost as much surprised as Zack, when he witnessed her greeting to Mr. Marksman. It was an infallible sign of Madonna's approval, if she followed up an introduction by handing her slate of her own accord to a stranger. When she was presented to people whom she disliked, she invariably kept it by her side until it was formally asked for.

Eccentric in everything else, Mat was consistently eccentric even in his confusion. Some men who are bashful in a young lady's presence, show it by blushing—Mat's color sank instead of rising. Other men, similarly affected, betray their burdensome modesty, by fidgeting incessantly—Mat was as still as a statue. His eyes wandered heavily and vacantly over the girl, beginning with her soft brown hair, then resting for a moment on her face, then descending to the gay pink riband on her breast, and to her crisp black silk apron with its smart lace pockets—then dropping at last to her neat little shoes, and to the thin bright line of white stocking that just separated them from the hem of her favorite gray dress. He only looked up again, when she touched his hand, and put her slate-pencil into it. At that signal, he raised his eyes once more, read the line she had written to thank him for the scarlet pouch, and tried to write something in return. But his hand shook, and his thoughts (if he had any) seemed to fail him. He gave her back the slate and pencil, looking her full in the eyes as he did so. A curious change came over his face at the same time—a change like that which had altered him so remarkably in the hosier's shop at Dibledean.



"Zack might, after all, have made many a worse friend than this man," thought Mr. Blyth, still attentively observing Mat. "Vagabonds don't behave in the presence of young girls as he is behaving now."

With this idea in his mind, Valentine advanced to help Mr. Marksman in his bewilderment by showing him how to communicate with Madonna. He was interrupted, however, by young Thorpe, who, the moment he recovered from his first sensations of surprise, began to talk nonsense again, at the top of his voice, with the mischievous intention of increasing Mat's embarrassment.

While Mr. Blyth was attempting to silence Zack by leading him to the supper-table, Madonna was trying her best, in a new way, to reassure the great bulky, sun-burnt man who seemed to be absolutely afraid of her. She moved to a stool, which stood near a second table in a corner by the fireplace; and sitting down, produced the scarlet pouch, intimating by a gesture that Mat was to look at what she was now doing. She then laid the pouch open on her lap, and put into it several little work-box toys, a Tonbridge silk-reel, an ivory needle-case, a silver thimble with an enamelled rim, a tiny pair of scissors, and other things of the same kind—which she took first from one pocket of her apron and then from another. While she was engaged in filling the pouch, Zack, standing at the supper-table, drummed on the floor with his foot to attract her attention, and interrogatively held up a decanter of wine and a glass. She started as the sound struck on her delicate nerves; and, looking at young Thorpe directly, signed that she did not wish for any wine. The sudden movement of her body thus occasioned, shook off her lap a little mother-of-pearl bodkin-case, which lay more than half out of one of the pockets of her apron. The bodkin-case rolled under the stool, without her seeing it, for she was looking toward the supper-table: without being observed by Mat, for his eyes were following the direction of her head: without being heard by Mr. Blyth, for Zack was, as usual, chattering and making a noise.

When she had put two other little toys that remained in her pockets into the pouch, she drew the mouth of it tight, passed the loops of the loose thongs that fastened it, over one of her arms, and then, rising to her feet, pointed to it, and looked at Mr. Marksman with a very significant nod. The action expressed the idea she wished to communicate, plainly enough: "See," it seemed to say, "see what a pretty work-bag I can make of your tobacco-pouch!"

But Mat, to all appearance, was not able to find out the meaning of one of her gestures, easy as they were to interpret. His

senses seemed to grow more and more perturbed the longer he looked at her. As she courtied to him again, and moved away in despair, he stepped forward a little, and suddenly and awkwardly held out his hand. "The big man seems to be getting a little less afraid of me," thought Madonna, turning directly, and meeting his clumsy advance toward her with a smile. But the instant he took her hand, her lips closed, and she shivered through her whole body as if dead fingers had touched her. "Oh," she thought now, "how cold his hand is. how cold his hand is!"

"If I hadn't felt her warm to touch, I should have got dreaming to-night that I'd seen Mary's ghost." This was the grim fancy which darkly troubled Mat's mind, at the very same moment when Madonna was thinking how cold his hand was. He turned away impatiently from some wine offered to him just then by Zack; and, looking vacantly into the fire, drew his coat-cuff several times over his eyes and forehead.

The chill from the strange man's hand still lingered icily about Madonna's fingers, and made her anxious, though she hardly knew why, to leave the room. She advanced hastily to Valentine, and made the sign which indicated Mrs. Blyth, by laying her hand on her heart; she then pointed upstairs. Valentine, understanding what she wanted, gave her leave directly to return to his wife's room. Before Zack could make even a gesture to detain her, she had slipped out of the studio, after not having remained in it much longer than five minutes.

"Zack," whispered Mr. Blyth, as the door closed, "I'm anything but pleased with you for bringing Madonna down-stairs. You have broken through all rule in doing so; and, besides that, you have confused your friend by introducing her to him without any warning or preparation."

"Oh, that's not of the slightest consequence," interrupted young Thorpe. "He's not the sort of man to want warning about anything. I apologize for breaking rules: but as for Mat—why, hang it, Blyth, it's plain enough what has been wrong with him since supper came in! He's fairly knocked up with doing Hercules for you. You've kept the poor old Guy for near two hours standing in one position, without a rag on his back; and then you wonder—"

"Bless my soul! that never occurred to me. I'm afraid you're right," exclaimed Valentine. "Do let us make him take something hot and comfortable! Dear, dear me! how ought one to mix grog?" Mr. Blyth had been for some little time past trying his best to compound a species of fiery and potential "squaw's mixture" for Mat. He had begun the attempt some minutes before Madonna left the studio—having previously found it useless to offer

any explanations to his inattentive guest of the meaning of the girl's signs and gestures with the slate and tobacco-pouch. He had persevered in his hospitable endeavor all through the whispered dialogue which had just passed between Zack and himself; and he had now filled the glass nearly to the brim, when it suddenly occurred to him that he had put sherry in at the top of the tumbler, after having begun with brandy at the bottom; and also that he had altogether forgotten some important ingredient which he was, just then, perfectly incapable of calling to mind.

"Here, Mat!" cried Zack, "come and mix yourself something hot. Blyth's been trying to do it for you, and can't."

Mr. Marksman, who had been staring more and more vacantly into the fire all this time, turned round again at last toward his friends at the supper-table. He started a little when he saw that Madonna was no longer in the room—then looked aside from the door by which she had departed, to the bureau. He had been pretty obstinately determined to get possession of the hair bracelet from the first; but he was doubly and trebly determined now.

"It's no use looking about for the young lady," said Zack; "you behaved so clumsily and queerly, that you frightened her out of the room."

"No, no! nothing of the sort," interposed Valentine, good-naturedly. "Pray, take something to warm you. I am quite ashamed of my want of consideration in keeping you standing so long for Hercules, when I ought to have remembered that you were not used to being a painter's model. I hope I have not given you cold—"

"Given me cold?" repeated Mat, amazedly. He seemed about to add a sufficiently strong and indignant assertion of his superiority to any such civilized bodily weakness as a liability to catch cold. But just as the words were on his lips, he looked fixedly at Mr. Blyth, and checked himself.

"I am afraid you must be tired with the long sitting you have so kindly given me," added Valentine.

"No," answered Mat, after a moment's consideration, "not tired; only sleepy. I'd best go home. What's o'clock?"

A reference to young Thorpe's watch showed that it was ten minutes past ten. Mat held out his hand directly to take leave, but Valentine positively refused to let him depart until he had helped himself to something from the supper-table. Hearing this, he poured out a glass of brandy, and drank it off; then held out his hand once more, and said, "Good-night."

"Well, I won't press you to stay against your will," said Mr. Blyth, rather mournfully. "I will only thank you again most heartily for your kindness in sitting to me,

and say that I hope to see you again when I return from the country.—Good-by, Zack. I shall start in the morning by an early train. The sooner I finish these new portrait jobs, and get home again, the better I shall be pleased. Pray, my dear boy, be steady, and remember your mother and your promises, and call on Mr. Strather in good time to-morrow; and stick to your work, Zack—for all our sakes, stick to your work!"

As they left the studio, Mat cast one parting glance at the garden-door. Would the servant, who had most likely bolted and locked it early in the evening, go near it again before she went to bed? Would Mr. Blyth walk to the bottom of the room to see that the door was safe, after he had raked the fire out?—Important questions these, which only the events of the night could answer.

Zack hardly waited until he and his friend had got out into the road, before he began to ridicule Mat's clumsy and helpless behavior in Madonna's presence, with all the powers of sarcasm that he had at his disposal. Mr. Marksman let him talk as long as he pleased, and hardly favored him in return with so much as a word of answer. The usual result of allowing him to run on unchecked in this way soon arrived: young Thorpe's vein of satire was all but exhausted before they got home, for want of the timely repression of an occasional reply.

A little way down Kirk street, at the end by which they now entered it, stood the local theatre, all ablaze with dazzling gas, and all astir with loitering blackguards. Zack stopped, as he and his companion passed under the portico, on the way to their lodgings farther up the street.

"It's only half-past ten now," said he. "I shall drop in here, and see the last bit of the pantomime. Won't you come, too?"

"No," said Mat; "I'm too sleepy. I shall go on home."

They separated. While Zack entered the theatre, Mr. Marksman proceeded steadily in the direction of the tobacco-shop. As soon, however, as he was well out of the glare of gas from the theatre-door, he crossed the street; and, returning quickly by the opposite side of the way, took the road that led to Valentine's house.

## CHAPTER XII.

### THE HAIR BRACELET.

MR. BLYTH'S spirits sank apace, as he bolted and locked the front door, when his guests had left him. He was never quite so lively as usual at other times, when on the point of leaving home; but no depres-



mon at all comparable in intensity to that which he now exhibited, had ever got possession of him on the eve of any past travelling-expedition whatever. He actually sighed as he now took a turn or two alone, up and down the studio.

Three times did he approach close to the garden-door, as he walked slowly from end to end of the room. But he never once looked up at it. His thoughts were wandering after Zack and Zack's friend, and his attention was keeping them company. "Whoever this Mr. Marksman may be," mused Valentine, stopping at the fourth turn, and walking up to the fireplace; "I don't believe there's anything bad about him, and so I shall tell Mrs. Thorpe the next time I see her."

He set himself to rake out the fire, leaving only a few red embers and tiny morsels of coal to flame up fitfully from time to time in the bottom of the grate. Having done this, he stood and warmed himself for a little while, and tried to whistle his favorite "Drops of Brandy." The attempt was a total failure. He broke down at the third bar, and ended lamentably in another sigh.

"What can be the matter with me? I never felt so down in the mouth about going away from home before." Puzzling himself uselessly with such reflections as these, he went to the supper-table, and drank a glass of wine, picked a bit of a sandwich, and unnecessarily spoilt the appearance of two sponge-cakes by absently breaking a small piece off each of them. He was in no better humor for eating or drinking than for whistling "Drops of Brandy;" so he wisely determined to light his candle forthwith, and go to bed.

After extinguishing the lights that had been burning on the supper-table, he just cast a parting glance all round the room, and was then about to leave it, when the drawing of the old five-barred gate, which he had taken down for Mat to look at, and had placed on a painting-stand at the lower end of the studio, caught his eye. He advanced toward it directly, but stopped half-way—hesitated—yawned—shivered a little—thought to himself that it was not worth while to trouble about hanging the drawing up over the garden-door that night—and so, yawning again, turned on his heel, and left the studio.

Mr. Blyth's two servants slept up-stairs. About ten minutes after their master had ascended to his bedroom, they left the kitchen for their dormitory on the garret-floor. Patty, the housemaid, stopped as she passed the painting-room, to look in and see that the lights were out, and the fire safe for the night. Polly, the cook, went on with the bedroom-candle; and, after having ascended the stairs as far as the first landing from the hall, discreetly bethought herself of the

garden-door, the general care and superintendence of which was properly attached to her department in the household.

"I say, did you lock the garden-door?" said Polly to Patty, through the banisters.

"Yes; I did it when I took up master's tea," said Patty to Polly, appearing lazily in the hall, after one sleepy look round the fast-darkening studio.

"Hadh't you better see to it again, to make sure?" suggested the cautious cook.

"Hadh't *you*? It's *your* place," retorted the careless housemaid.

"Hush!" whispered Valentine, suddenly appearing on the landing above Polly, from his bedroom, arrayed in his flannel dressing-gown and nightcap. "Don't talk here, or you'll disturb your mistress. Go up to bed, and talk there. Good-night."

"Good-night, sir," answered together the two faithful female dependants of the house of Blyth, obeying their master's order with simpering docility, and deferring to a future opportunity all further considerations connected with the garden-door.

The fire was fading out fast in the studio-grate. Now and then, at long intervals, a thin tongue of flame leaped up faintly against the ever-invading gloom, flickered for an instant over the brighter and more prominent objects in the room, then dropped back again into darkness. The profound silence was only interrupted by those weird house-noises which live in the death of night, and die in the life of day; by that sudden crackling in the wall, by that mysterious creaking in the furniture, by those still, small, ghostly sounds from inanimate bodies, which we have all been startled by, over and over again, while lingering at our book after the rest of the family are asleep in bed, while waiting up for a friend who is out late, or while watching alone through the dark hours in a sick-chamber. Excepting such occasional night-noises as these, so familiar, yet always so strange, the perfect tranquillity of the studio remained undisturbed for nearly an hour after Mr. Blyth had left it. No neighbors came home in cabs; no bawling, drunken men wandered into the remote country fastnesses of the new suburb. The night-breeze, blowing in from the fields, was too light to be audible. The watch-dog in the nursery-man's garden hard by, was as quiet on this particular night as if he had actually barked himself dumb at last. Outside the house, as well as inside, the drowsy reign of old primeval Quiet was undisturbed by the innovating vagaries of the rebel Noise.

Undisturbed till the clock in the hall pointed to a quarter past eleven. Then there came softly and slowly up the iron stairs that led from the back garden, to the studio, a sound of footsteps. When these ceased, the door at the lower end of the room was opened gently from outside, and

the black bulky figure of Mr. Matthew Marksman appeared on the threshold, lowering out gloomily against a background of starry sky.

He stepped into the painting-room, and closed the door quietly behind him; stood listening anxiously in the darkness for a moment or two; then pulling from his pocket the wax-taper and the matches which he had bought that afternoon, immediately provided himself with a light.

While the wick of the taper was burning up, he listened again. Except the sound of his own heavy breathing all was quiet around him. He advanced at once to the bureau, starting involuntarily as he brushed by Mr. Blyth's lay-figure with the Spanish hat and the Roman toga; and cursing it under his breath for standing in his way, as if it had been a living creature. The door leading from the studio into the passage of the house was not quite closed; but he never noticed this as he passed to the bureau, though it stood close to the chink left between the door and the post. He had the false key in his hand; he knew that he should be in possession of the hair bracelet in another moment, and his impatience for once getting the better of his cunning and coolness, he pounced on the bureau, without looking either to the right or the left.

He had unlocked it, had pulled open the inner drawer, had taken out the hair bracelet, and was just holding his lighted taper to it, to examine it closely (after having locked the bureau again), when a faint sound on the staircase of the house caught his ear.

At the same instant, a thin streak of candle-light flashed on him through the narrow chink between the hardly-closed door and the doorpost. It increased rapidly in intensity as the sound of softly-advancing footsteps now grew more and more distinct from the stone passage leading to the interior of the house.

He had the presence of mind to extinguish his taper, to thrust the hair bracelet into his pocket, and to move across softly from the bureau (which stood against the lock-side doorpost), to the wall (which was by the hinge-side doorpost), so that the door itself might open back upon him, and thus keep him concealed from the view of any person entering the room. He had the presence of mind to take these precautions instantly; but he had not self-control enough to suppress the involuntary exclamation which burst from his lips at the moment when the thin streak of candle-light first flashed into his eyes. A violent spasmodic action contracted the muscles of his throat; he clenched his fist in a fury of suppressed rage against himself, as he felt that his own voice had turned traitor and betrayed him.

The light came close: the door opened—opened gently, till it just touched him as he stood with his back against the wall.

For one instant his heart stopped; the next, it burst into action again with a heave, and the blood rushed hotly through every vein all over him, from head to foot as his wrought-up nerves of mind and body relaxed together under a sense of ineffable relief. He was saved almost by a miracle from the inevitable consequence of the rash exclamation that had escaped him. It was Madonna who had opened the door—it was the deaf and dumb girl whom he now saw walking into the studio.

She had been taking her working materials out of the tobacco-pouch, in her own room, before going to bed, and had then missed her mother-of-pearl bodkin-case. Suspecting immediately that she must have dropped it in the studio, and fearing that it might be trodden on and crushed if she left it there until the next morning, she had now stolen down-stairs by herself to look for it. Her hair, not yet put up for the night, was combed back from her face, and lightly hung down in long silky folds over her shoulders. Her complexion looked more exquisitely clear and pure than ever, set off as it was by the white dressing-gown which now clothed her. She had a pretty little red and blue china candlestick, given to her by Mrs. Blyth, in her hand; and, holding the light above her, advanced slowly from the studio doorway, with her eyes bent on the ground, searching anxiously for the missing bodkin-case.

Mat's resolution was taken the moment he caught sight of her. He never stirred an inch from his place of concealment, until she had advanced three or four paces into the room, and had her back turned full upon him. Then quietly stepping a little forward from the door, but still keeping well behind her, he blew out her candle, just as she was raising it over her head, and looking down intently on the floor in front of her.

He had calculated, rightly enough, on being able to execute this manœuvre with impunity from discovery, knowing that she was incapable of hearing the sound of his breath when he blew her candle out, and that the darkness would afterward not only effectually shield him from detection, but also oblige her to leave him alone in the room again, while she went to get another light. He had not calculated, however, on the serious effect which the performance of his stratagem would have upon her nerves, for he knew nothing of the horror which the loss of her sense of hearing caused her always to feel when she was left in darkness; and he had not stopped to consider that by depriving her of her light, he was depriving her of that all-important guiding sense of sight, the loss of which



she could not supply in the dark, as others could, by the exercise of the ear.

The instant he blew her candle out, she dropped the china candlestick in a paroxysm of terror. It fell, and broke, with a deadened sound, on one of the many portfolios lying on the floor about her. He had hardly time to hear this happen, before the dumb moaning, the inarticulate cry of fear, which was all that the poor panic-stricken girl could utter,—rose low, shuddering and ceaseless, in the darkness, so close at his ear, that he fancied he could feel her breath palpitating quick and warm on his cheek.

If she should touch him? If she should be sensible of the motion of *his* foot on the floor, as she had been sensible of the motion of Zack's, when young Thorpe offered her the glass of wine at supper-time? It was a risk to remain still—it was a risk to move! He stood as helpless even as the helpless creature near him. That low, ceaseless, dumb moaning, neither varied nor overcome by any other sound, to show that she was moving to get out of the room, smote so painfully on his heart, roused up so fearfully the rude superstitious fancies lying in wait within him, in connection with the lost and dead Mary Grice, that the sweat broke out on his face, the coldness of sharp mental suffering seized on his limbs, the fever of unutterable expectations parched up his throat and mouth and lips; and for the first time, perhaps, in his existence, he felt the chillness of mortal dread running through him to his very soul—he, who, amid perils of seas and wildernesses, and horrors of hunger and thirst, had played familiarly with his own life for more than twenty years past, as a child plays familiarly with an old toy.

He knew not how long it was before the dumb moaning seemed to grow fainter; to be less fearfully close to him; to change into what sounded, at one moment, like a shivering of her whole body; at another, like a rustling of her garments; at a third, like a slow scraping of her hands over the table on the other side of her, and of her feet over the floor. She had summoned courage enough at last to move, and to grope her way out—he knew it as he listened. He heard her touch the edge of the half-opened door; he heard the still sound of her first footfall on the stone passage outside; then the noise of her hand drawn along the wall; then the far lessening gasps of her affrighted breathing as she gained the stairs.

When she was gone, and the change and comfort of silence and solitude stole over him, his power of thinking, his cunning and resolution, began to return. Listening yet a little while, and hearing no sound of any disturbance among the sleepers in the house, he ventured to light one of his

atches: and, by the brief flicker that it afforded, picked his way noiselessly through the lumber in the studio, and gained the garden-door. In a minute he was out again in the open air. In a minute more, he had got over the garden-wall, and was walking freely along the lonely road of the new suburb, with the hair bracelet safe in his pocket.

At first, he did not attempt to take it out and examine it. He had not felt the slightest scruple beforehand; he did not feel the slightest remorse now, in connection with the bracelet, and with his manner of obtaining possession of it. Callous, however, as he was in this direction, he was sensitive in another. There was both regret and repentance in him, as he thought of the deaf and dumb girl, and of the paroxysm of terror that he had caused her. How patiently and prettily she had tried to explain to him her gratitude for his gift, and the use she meant to put it to; and how cruelly he had made her suffer in return! "I wish I hadn't frightened her so," said Mat to himself, thinking of this in his own rough way, as he walked rapidly homeward. "I wish I hadn't frightened her so."

But his impatience to examine the bracelet got the better of his repentance, as it had already got the better of every other thought and feeling in him. He stopped under a gas-lamp, and drew his prize out of his pocket. He could see that it was made of two kinds of hair, and that something was engraved on the flat gold of the clasp. But his hand shook, his eyes were dimmer than usual, the light was too high above him, and try as he might he could make out nothing clearly.

He put the bracelet into his pocket again, and, muttering to himself impatiently, made for Kirk street at his utmost speed. The tobacconist's wife happened to be in the passage when he opened the door. Without the ceremony of a single preliminary word, he astonished her by taking her candle out of her hand, and instantly disappearing up-stairs with it. Zack had not come from the theatre—he had the lodgings to himself—he could examine the hair bracelet in perfect freedom.

His first look was at the clasp. By holding it close to the flame of the candle, he succeeded in reading the letters engraved on it.

"M. G. In memory of S. G."

"*Mary Grice. In memory of Susan Grice.*" Mat's hand closed fast on the bracelet—and dropped heavily on his knee, as he uttered those words.

\* \* \* \* \*

The pantomime which Zack had gone to see, was so lengthened out by encores of incidental songs and dances, that it was not over till close on midnight. When he left

the theatre, the physical consequences of breathing a vitiated atmosphere made themselves felt immediately in the regions of his mouth, throat, and stomach. Those ardent aspirations in the direction of shell-fish and malt liquor, which it is especially the mission of the drama to create, glowed in his breast as soon as he issued into the fresh air, and took him to the local oyster-shop for refreshment and change of scene.

Having the immediate prospect of the British Museum, and Mr. Strather of the Little Bilge street drawing academy, vividly and menacingly present before his eyes, Zack thought of the future for once in his life, and astonished the ministering vassals of the oyster-shop (with all of whom he was on terms of intimate friendship), by enjoying himself with exemplary moderation at the festive board. When he had done supper, and was on his way to bed at the tobacconist's across the road, it is actually not too much to say that he was sober and subdued enough to have borne inspection by the president and council of the royal academy, as a highly respectable student of the fine arts.

It surprised him a little not to hear his friend snoring when he let himself into the passage—and it astonished him very considerably, when he entered the front room, to see the employment on which Mr. Marksman was engaged.

Mat was sitting by the table, with his rifle laid across his knees, and was scouring the barrel bright with a piece of sand-paper. By his side was an unsnuffed candle, an empty bottle, and a tumbler with a little raw brandy left in the bottom of it. His face, when he looked up, showed that he had been drinking hard. There was a stare in his eyes that was at once fierce and vacant, and a hard, fixed, unnatural smile on his lips which Zack did not at all like to see.

"Why, Mat, old boy!" said he, soothingly, "you look a little out of sorts. What's wrong?"

Mat scoured away at the barrel of the gun harder than ever, and gave no answer.

"What, in the name of wonder, can you be scouring your rifle for, to-night?" continued young Thorpe. "You have never yet touched it since you brought it into the house. What can you possibly want with it now? We don't shoot birds in England with rifle-bullets."

"A rifle-bullet will do for *my* game, if I put it up," said Mat, suddenly and fiercely fixing his eyes on Zack.

"What game does he mean?" thought young Thorpe. "He's been drinking himself pretty nearly drunk. Can anything have happened to him since we parted company at the theatre? I should like to find out; but he's such a d—d old savage

when the brandy's in his head, that I don't half like to pump him—"

Here Zack's reflections were interrupted by the voice of his eccentric friend.

"Did you ever meet with a man of the name of Carr?" asked Mat. He looked away from young Thorpe, keeping his eyes steadily on the rifle, and rubbing hard at the barrel, as he put this question.

"No," said Zack. "Not that I can remember."

Mat left off cleaning the gun, and began to fumble awkwardly in one of his pockets. After some little time, he produced what appeared to Zack to be an inordinately long letter, written in a cramped hand, and superscribed apparently with two long lines of inscription, instead of an ordinary address. Opening this strange-looking document, Mat guided himself a little way down the lines on the first page with a very unsteady forefinger—stopped, and read something anxiously and with evident difficulty—then put the letter back in his pocket, dropped his eyes once more on the gun in his lap, and said, with a strong emphasis on the Christian name:—

"Arthur Carr?"

"No," returned Zack. "I never met with a man of that name. Is he a friend of yours?"

Mat went on scouring the rifle-barrel.

Young Thorpe said nothing more. He had been a little puzzled early in the evening, when his friend had exhibited the fan and tobacco-pouch (neither of which had been ever produced before), and had mentioned to Mr. Blyth that they were once intended for "a woman" who was now dead (to which "woman" Mat had never previously alluded, even in the bachelor familiarity of the lodgings in Kirk street). Zack had thought this conduct rather odd at the time; but now, when it was followed by these strangely abrupt references to the name of Carr, by this mysterious scouring of the rifle, and desperate brandy-drinking in solitude, he began to feel perplexed in the last degree about Mat's behavior. "Is this about Arthur Carr a secret of the old boy's?" Zack asked himself with a sort of bewildered curiosity. "Is he letting out more than he ought, I wonder, now he's a little in liquor?"

While young Thorpe was pondering thus, Mr. Marksman was still industriously scouring the barrel of the rifle. After the silence in the room had lasted some minutes, he suddenly threw away his bit of sand-paper, and spoke again.

"Zack," said he, familiarly smacking the stock of the rifle, while he still looked down steadily on it, "Me and you had some talk once about going away to the wild country over the waters together. I'm ready to sail when you are, if—" He had glanced up at



young Thorpe with his vacant blood-shot eyes, as he spoke the last words. But he checked himself almost at the same moment, and looked away again quickly at the gun.

"If what?" asked Zack.

"I want to find out Arthur Carr first," answered Mat evasively, and with very unusual lowness of tone. "Only let me do that, and I shall be game to tramp it at an hour's notice. He may be dead and buried for anything I know—"

"Then what's the use of looking for him?" interposed Zack.

"The use is, I've got it into my head he's alive, and that I shall find him," returned Mat.

"Well?" said young Thorpe eagerly.

Mat became silent again. His head drooped slowly forward, and his body followed it till he rested his elbows on the gun. Sitting in this strange crouched-up position, he abstractedly began to amuse himself by snapping the lock of the rifle. Zack, suspecting that the brandy he had swallowed was beginning to stupefy him, determined with characteristic recklessness, to rouse him into talking at any hazard.

"What the devil is all this mystery about?" he cried boldly. "I'll be hanged if I can make out what you've been up to all night! Ever since you pulled out that feather-fan and tobacco-pouch at Blyth's—"

"Well! what of them?" interrupted Mat, looking up instantly with a fierce, suspicious stare.

"Nothing particular," pursued Zack, undauntedly, "except that it's odd that you never brought them out before; and odder still that you should tell Blyth, and never say a word here to me, about getting them for a woman, who—"

"What of *her*?" broke out Mat, rising to his feet with flushed face and threatening eyes, and making the room ring again as he grounded his rifle on the floor.

"Nothing but what a friend ought to say," replied Zack, feeling that, in Mr. Marksman's present condition, he had ventured a little too far. "I'm sorry, for your sake, that she never lived to have the presents you meant for her. There's no offence, I hope, in saying that much, or in asking (after what you yourself told Blyth) whether her death happened lately, or—"

"It happened afore ever you was born." He gave this answer, which amazed Zack more than anything he had heard yet, in a curiously smothered, abstracted tone, as if he were talking to himself; laying aside the rifle suddenly as he spoke, sitting down by the table again, and resting his head on his hand. Young Thorpe took a chair near him, but wisely refrained from saying anything just at that moment. Silence seemed to favor the change that was taking place

for the better in Ma's temper. He looked up, after awhile, and regarded Zack with a rough wistfulness and anxiety working in his swarthy face. "I like you, Zack," he said, laying one hand on the lad's arm and mechanically stroking down the cloth of his sleeve. "I like you. Don't let us two part company. Let's always pull together brotherly and pleasant as we can." He paused. His hand tightened round young Thorpe's arm; and the hot, dry, tearless look in his eyes began to soften as he added, "I take it kind in you, Zack, saying you were sorry for her just now. She died afore ever you was born." His hand relaxed its grasp; and when he had repeated those last words, he turned a little away, and said no more.

Astonishment and curiosity impelled young Thorpe to hazard another question.

"Was she a sweetheart of yours?" he asked, unconsciously sinking his voice to a whisper, "or a relation, or—"

"Kin to me. Kin to me," said Mat quickly, yet not impatiently; reaching out his hand again to Zack's arm, but without looking up.

"Was she your mother?"

"No."

"Sister?"

"Yes."

For a minute or two Zack was silent after this answer. As soon as he began to speak again, his companion shook his arm—a little impatiently, this time—and stopped him.

"Drop it," said Mat peremptorily. "Don't let's talk no more, my head—"

"Anything wrong with your head?" asked Zack.

Mat rose to his feet again. A change began to appear in his face. The flush that had tinged it from the first, deepened palpably, and spread up to the very rim of his black skull-cap. A confusion and dimness seemed to be stealing over his eyes, a thickness and heaviness to be impeding his articulation when he spoke again.

"I've overdone it with the brandy," he said, "my head's getting hot under the place where they scalped me. Give me hold of my hat, and show me a light, Zack. I can't stop in doors no longer. Don't talk! Let me out of the house at once."

Young Thorpe took up the candle directly; and leading the way down-stairs, let him out into the street by the private door, not venturing to irritate him by saying anything, but waiting on the doorstep, and watching him with great curiosity as he started for his walk. He was just getting out of sight, when Zack heard him stop, and strike his stick on the pavement. In less than a minute he had turned, and was back again at the door of the tobaccoist's shop.

"Zack," he whispered "you ask about among your friends if any of 'em ever knowed a man with that name I told you of."

"Do you mean the '*Arthur Carr*' you were talking about just now?" inquired young Thorpe.

"Yes; *Arthur Carr*," said Mat, very earnestly. Then, turning away before Zack could ask him any other questions, he disappeared rapidly this time in the darkness of the street.

### CHAPTER XIII.

#### MR. MARKSMAN'S SECOND COUNTRY IRIP.

MR. BLYTH was astir betimes on the morning after Mat and young Thorpe had visited him in the studio. Manfully determined not to give way an inch to his own continued reluctance to leave home, he packed up his brushes and colors, took an affectionate leave of his wife and Madonna, and started on his portrait-painting tour by the early train which he had originally settled to travel by.

His present prospects of professional employment took him to the west of England, and to a neighborhood renowned for the hospitality of its inhabitants and the beauty of its scenery. Though he had thus every chance of spending his time, during his absence, agreeably as well as profitably, his inexplicable sense of uneasiness at being away from home, remained with him even on the railway, defying all the exhilarating influences of rapid motion and change of scene, and oppressing him just as inveterately as it had oppressed him the night before. Bad, however, as his spirits now were, they would have been worse if he had known of two remarkable domestic events which it had been the policy of his household to keep strictly concealed from him on the day of his departure.

When Mr Blyth's coach descended, the first thing in the morning, to air the studio in the usual way by opening the garden-door, she was not a little amazed and alarmed to find that, although it was closed, it was neither bolted nor locked. She communicated this circumstance (reproachfully, of course) to the housemaid, who answered (indignantly, as was only natural) by reiterating her assertion of the past night, that she had secured the door properly at six o'clock in the evening. Polly, appealing to contradictory, visible fact, rejoined that the thing was impossible. Patty, holding fast to affirmatory personal knowledge, retorted that the thing had been done. Upon this, the two had a violent quarrel—followed by a sulky silence—succeeded by an

affectionate reconciliation—terminated by a politic resolution to say nothing more about the matter, and especially to abstain from breathing a word in connection with it to the ruling authorities above-stairs. Thus it happened that neither Valentine nor his wife knew anything of the suspicious appearance presented that morning by the garden-door.

But, though Mrs. Blyth was ignorant on this point, she was well enough informed on another of equal if not greater domestic importance. While her husband was downstairs taking his early breakfast, Madonna came into her room, and followed up the usual morning greeting between the painter's wife and herself by communicating confidentially all the particulars of the terrible fright that she had suffered while looking for her bodkin-case in the studio. How her candle could possibly have gone out, as it did in an instant, she could not say. She was quite sure that nobody was in the room when she entered it, and quite sure that she felt no draught of wind in any direction; in short, she knew nothing of her own experience, but that her candle suddenly went out; that she remained for a little time, half-dead with fright, in the darkness; and that she then managed to grope her way back to her bedroom, in which a night-light was always burning.

Mrs. Blyth followed the progress of this strange story on Madonna's fingers with great interest to the end; and then, after suggesting that the candle might have gone out through some defect in the make of it, or might really have been extinguished by a puff of air which the girl was too much occupied in looking for her bodkin-case to attend to, earnestly charged her not to say a word on the subject of her adventure to Valentine, when she went to help him in packing up his painting-materials. "He is nervous and uncomfortable enough already, poor fellow, at the idea of leaving home," thought Mrs. Blyth; "and if he heard the story about the candle going out, it would only make him more uneasy still." To explain this consideration to Madonna was to insure her discretion. She accordingly kept her adventure in the studio so profound a secret from Mr. Blyth, that he no more suspected what had happened to her after he was in bed, than he suspected what had happened to the hair bracelet when he hastily assured himself that he was leaving his bureau properly locked, by trying the lid of it the last thing before going away.

Such were the circumstances under which Valentine left home. He was not, however, the only traveller of the reader's acquaintance whose departure from London took place on the morning after the mysterious extinguishing of Madonna's light in the painting-room. By a whimsical coinci-



dence, it so happened that, at the very same hour when Mr. Blyth was journeying westward to paint portraits, Mr. Matthew Marksman (now, perhaps, also recognisable as Mr. Matthew Grice) was journeying northward, to pay a second visit to Dibbledean.

Not a visit of pleasure by any means, but a visit of business—dangerous personal business which could not be trusted to clerks and deputies—doubtful, underhand business, of the sort that can not safely be written in daybooks and ledgers—business, which, in every particular, Mat had especially intended to keep strictly secret from Zack, but some inkling of which he had nevertheless weakly allowed to escape him during his past night's conversation with the lad in Kirk street.

When young Thorpe and he met on the morning after that conversation, he was sufficiently aware of the fact that his overdose of brandy had set him talking in a very unguarded manner; and desired Zack, as bluntly as usual, to repeat to him all that he had let out while liquor was in his head. After this request had been complied with, he volunteered no additional confidences. He simply said that what had slipped from his tongue was no more than the truth; but that he could add nothing to it, and explain nothing about it, until he had first discovered whether "Arthur Carr" were alive or dead. On being asked how and when he intended to discover this, he answered that he was going into the country to make the attempt that very morning; and that, if he succeeded, he would, on his return, tell his fellow-lodger unreservedly all that the latter might wish to know. Favored with this conditional promise, Zack was left alone in Kirk street, to quiet his curiosity as well as he could with the reflection that he should hear something more about his friend's secrets when Mat returned from his trip to the country.

In order to collect a little more information on the subject of these secrets than was at present possessed by Zack, it will be necessary to return for a moment to the lodgings in Kirk street, at that particular period of the night when Mr. Marksman was sitting alone in the front room, and was holding the hair bracelet crumpled up tight in one of his hands.

His first glance at the letters engraved on the clasp not only showed him to whom the bracelet had once belonged, but set at rest in his mind all further doubt as to the identity of the young woman whose face had so startled and impressed him in Mr. Blyth's studio. He was neither logical enough nor legal enough, in his mode of reasoning, to see that, although he had found his sister's bracelet in Valentine's bureau, it did not actually follow as a matter of proof—though it might as a matter of suspicion—that he

had also found his sister's child in Valentine's house. No such objection as this occurred to him. He was now perfectly satisfied that Madonna was what he had suspected her to be from the first—Mary's child.

But to the next questions that he asked himself, concerning the girl's father, the answers were not so easy to be found: Who was Arthur Carr? Where was he? Was he still alive?

These momentous inquiries had first started in his mind when he had talked with Johanna Grice, after hearing of his sister's death, at Dibbledean, and had read that one passage in the old woman's narrative, referring to Carr, which had accidentally caught his eye in the cattle-shed. His thoughts had, however, been prematurely turned aside from pursuing the direction then given to them, by his meeting soon afterward with Madonna, and by the train of events and projects which had followed that meeting. Now, when his mind was once more at leisure to resume the consideration of the questions referred to, they recurred to him with redoubled force: Who was Arthur Carr? Where was he? Was he still alive?

His first, hasty suspicion that Valentine might have assumed the name of Arthur Carr, and might therefore be the man himself, was set at rest immediately by another look at the bracelet. He knew that the lightest in color, of the two kinds of hair of which it was made, was Carr's hair, because it exactly resembled the surplus lock sent back by the jeweller, and enclosed in Jane Holdsworth's letter. He made the comparison and discovered the resemblance at a glance. The evidence of his own eyesight, which was enough for this, was also enough to satisfy him immediately that Arthur Carr's hair was, in color, as nearly as possible the exact opposite of Mr. Blyth's hair.

Still, though the painter was assuredly not the father, might he not know *who* the father was, or had been? How *could* he otherwise have got possession of Mary Grice's bracelet and Mary Grice's child?

These two questions suggested a third in Mat's mind. Should he discover himself at once to Mr. Blyth, and compel him by fair means or foul, to solve all doubts and disclose what he knew?

No—not at once. That would be playing, at the outset, a desperate and dangerous move in the game, which had best be reserved to the last. Besides, it was useless to think of questioning Mr. Blyth just now—except by the uncertain and indiscreet process of following him into the country—for he had settled to take his departure from London early the next morning.

But it was now impossible to rest, after what had been already discovered, without

beginning, in one direction or another, the attempt to find out Arthur Carr. Mat's purpose of doing this sprang from the strongest of all resolutions—a vindictive resolution. That dangerous part of the man's nature which his life among the savages and his wanderings in the wild places of the earth had been stealthily nurturing for many a long year past, was beginning to assert itself, now that he had succeeded in penetrating the mystery of Madonna's parentage by the mother's side. Placed in his position, the tender thought of their sister's child would, at this particular crisis, have been uppermost in many men's hearts. The one deadly thought of the villain who had been Mary's ruin was uppermost in Mat's.

He pondered but a little while on the course that he should pursue, before the idea of returning to Dibbledean, and compelling Johanna Grice to tell more than she had told at their last interview, occurred to him. He disbelieved the passage in her narrative which stated that she had seen and heard nothing of Arthur Carr in all the years that had elapsed since the flight and death of her niece: he had his own conviction that, or rather his own presentiment (which he had mentioned to Zack), that the man was still alive somewhere; and he felt confident that he had it in his power, as a last resource, to awe the old woman into confessing everything that she knew. To Dibbledean, therefore, in the first instance, he resolved to go.

If he failed there in finding and clue to the object of his inquiry, he determined to repair next to Rubbleford, and to address himself boldly to Mrs. Peckover. He remembered that, when Zack had first mentioned her extraordinary behavior about the hair bracelet in Mr. Blyth's hall, he had prefaced his words by saying that she knew apparently as much of Madonna's history as the painter did himself, and kept that knowledge just as close and secret. This woman, therefore, doubtless possessed information which she might be either entrapped or forced into communicating. There would be no difficulty at all finding out where she lived; for, on the evening when he had mimicked her, young Thorpe had said that she kept a dairy and muffin-shop at Rubbleford. To that town, then, he proposed to journey, in the event of failing in his purpose at Dibbledean.

And if, by any evil chance, he should end in ascertaining no more from Mrs. Peckover than from Johanna Grice, what course should he take next? There would be nothing to be done then, but to return to London—to try the last great hazard—to discover himself to Mr. Blyth, come what might, with the hair bracelet to vouch for him in his hand.

These were his thoughts as he sat alone

in the lodging in Kirk street. At night, they had ended in the fatal consolation of the brandy-bottle—in the desperate and solitary excess, which had so cheated him of his self-control, that the lurking taint which his life among the savages had left in his disposition, and the deadly rancor which his recent discovery of his sister's fate had stored up in his heart, escaped from concealment, and betrayed themselves in that half-drunk, half-sober occupation of scouring the rifle-barrel, which it had so greatly amazed Zack to witness, and which the lad had so suddenly and strangely suspended by his few chance words of sympathizing reference to Mary's death.

But, in the morning, Mat's head was clear, and his dangerous instincts were held once more under cunning control. In the morning, therefore, he declined explaining himself to young Thorpe, and started quietly for the country by the first train.

On being set down at the Dibbledean station, Mr. Marksman lingered a little and looked about him, just as he had lingered and looked, on the occasion of his first visit. He subsequently took the same road to the town, which he had then taken; and, on gaining the church, stopped as he had formerly stopped, at the churchyard-gate.

This time, however, he seemed to have no intention of passing the entrance—no intention, indeed, of doing anything, unless standing vacantly by the gate, and mechanically swinging it backward and forward with both his hands, can be considered in the light of an occupation. As for the churchyard, he hardly looked at it now. There were two or three people, at a little distance, walking about among the graves, who it might have been thought would have attracted his attention: but he never took the smallest notice of them. He was evidently meditating about something, for he soon began to talk to himself—being, like most men who have passed much of their time in solitude, unconsciously in the habit of thinking aloud.

"I wonder how many year ago it is, since she and me used to swing back'ards and for'ards on this," he said, still pushing the gate slowly to and fro. "The hinges used to creak then. They go smooth enough now. Oiled, I suppose." As he said this, he moved his hands from the bar on which they rested, and turned away to go on to the town; but stopped, and walking back to the gate, looked attentively at its hinges: "Ah," he said, "not oiled. New."

"New," he repeated, walking slowly toward the High street—"new since my time, like everything else here. I wish I'd never come back—I wish to God I'd never come back!"

On getting into the town, he stopped at the same place where he had halted on his



first visit to Dibbledean, to look up again, as he had looked then, at the hosier's shop which had once belonged to Joshua Grice. Here, those visible and tangible signs and tokens, which he required to stimulate his sluggish memory, were not very easy to recognise. Though the general form of his father's old house was still preserved, the repainting and renovating of the whole front had somewhat altered it, in its individual parts, to his eyes. He looked up and down at the gables, and all along from window to window; and shook his head discontentedly. "New again here," he said. "I can't make out for certain which window it was Mary and me broke between us, when I come away from school, the year afore I went to sea. Whether it was Mary that broke the window, and me that took the blame," he continued, slowly pursuing his way—"or whether it was her that took the blame, and me that broke the window, I can't rightly call to mind. And no great wonder neither, if I've forgot such a thing as that, when I can't even fix it for certain, yet, whether she used to wear her hair bracelet or not, while I was at home."

Communing with himself in this way, he reached the turning that led to Johanna Grice's cottage.

His thoughts had thus far been straying away idly and uninterruptedly to the past. They were now recalled abruptly to present emergencies by certain unexpected appearances which met his eye, the moment he looked down the lane along which he was walking.

He remembered this place as having struck him by its silence and its loneliness, on the occasion of his first visit to Dibbledean. He now observed with some surprise that it was as stir with human beings, and noisy with the clamor of gossiping tongues. All the inhabitants of the cottages on either side of the road were out in their front gardens. All the townspeople who ought to have been walking about the principal streets, seemed to be incomprehensibly congregated in this one narrow little lane. What were they assembled here to do? What subject was it that men and women—and even children as well—were all eagerly talking about?

Without waiting to hear, without questioning anybody, without appearing to notice that he was stared at (as indeed all strangers are in rural England), as if he were walking about among a breched and petticoated people in the character of a savage with nothing but war paint on him, Mat steadily and rapidly pursued his way down the lane to Johanna Grice's cottage. "Time enough," thought he, "to find out what all this means, when I've got quietly into the house I'm bound for."

As he approached the cottage, he saw,

standing at the gate, what looked to his eyes, like two coaches—one, very strange in form: both very remarkable in color. All about the coaches stood solemn-looking gentlemen; and all about the solemn-looking gentlemen, circled inquisitively and excitably, the whole vagabond boy-and-girl population of Dibbledean.

Amazed, and even bewildered (though he hardly knew why) by what he saw, Mat hastened on to the cottage. Just as he arrived at the garden paling, the door opened, and from the inside of the dwelling there protruded slowly into the open air a coffin carried on four men's shoulders, and covered with a magnificent black velvet pall.

Mat stopped the moment he saw the coffin, and struck his hand violently on the paling by his side. "Dead?" he exclaimed under his breath.

"A friend of the late Miss Grice's?" asked a gently inquisitive voice near him.

He did not hear. All his attention was fixed on the coffin, as it was borne slowly over the garden-path. Behind it walked two gentlemen, mournfully arrayed in black cloaks and hat-bands. They carried white handkerchiefs in their hands, and used them to wipe—not their eyes—but their lips, on which the balmy dews of recent wine-drinking glistened gently.

"Dix and Nawby—the medical attendant of the deceased, and the solicitor who is her sole executor," said the voice near Mat, in tones which had ceased to be gently inquisitive, and had become complacently explanatory instead. "That's Millbury, the undertaker, and the other is Gutteridge of the White Hart inn, his brother-in-law, who supplies the refreshments, which in my opinion makes a regular job of it," continued the voice, as two red-faced gentlemen followed the doctor and the lawyer. "Something like a funeral, this! Not a half-penny less than forty pound, I should say, when it's all paid for. Beautiful, ain't it?" concluded the voice, becoming gently inquisitive again.

Still Mat kept his eyes fixed on the funeral proceedings in front; and took not the smallest notice of the pertinacious speaker behind him.

The coffin was placed in the hearse. Dr. Dix and Mr. Nawby entered the mourning-coach provided for them. The smug human vultures who prey commercially on the civilized dead, arranged themselves, with black wands, in solemn undertakers' order of procession on either side of the funeral vehicles. Those clumsy pomps of feathers and velvet, those grim vanities of strutting horses and marching mutes, which are still permitted among us to desecrate with grotesquely-shocking fiction the solemn fact of death, fluttered out in their blackest state grandeur and showed their most wolfish

state-paces, as the procession started magnificently with its meagre offering of one dead body more to the bare and awful grave.

When Mary Grice died, a fugitive and an outcast, the clown's wife and the Irish girl who rode in the circus, wept for her, stranger though she was, as they followed her coffin to the poor corner of the churchyard. When Johanna Grice died in the place of her birth, among the townspeople with whom her whole existence had been passed, every eye was tearless that looked on her funeral-procession—the two strangers who made part of it, gossiped pleasantly as they rode after the hearse about the news of the morning—and the sole surviving member of her family, whom chance had brought to her door on her burial-day, stood aloof from the hired mourners, and moved not a step to follow her to the grave.

No; not a step. The hearse rolled on slowly toward the churchyard, and the sight-seers in the lane followed it; but Matthew Grice stood by the garden paling, at the place where he had halted from the first. What was her death to him? Nothing but the loss of his first chance of tracing Arthur Carr. Tearlessly and pitilessly she had left it to strangers to bury her brother's daughter; and now, tearlessly and pitilessly, there stood her brother's son, leaving it to strangers to bury her.

"Don't you mean to follow to the churchyard, and see the last of it?" inquired the same inquisitive voice, which had twice already endeavored to attract Mat's attention.

He turned round this time to look at the speaker, and confronted a wizen, flax-haired, sharp-faced man, dressed in a jaunty shooting-jacket, carrying a riding-cane in his hand, and having a thoroughbred black-and-tan terrier in attendance at his heels.

"Excuse me asking the question," said the wizen man; "but I noticed you as you came up to the gate here, and observed how dumbfounded you were when you saw the coffin come out. 'A friend of the deceased,' I thought to myself directly—"

"Well," interrupted Mat, gruffly, "suppose I am; what then?"

"Will you oblige me by putting this in your pocket?" asked the wizen man, giving Mat a card. "My name's Tatt, and I've recently started in practice here as a solicitor. I don't want to ask any improper questions, but, being a friend of the deceased, you may perhaps have some claim on the estate; in which case, I should feel proud to take care of your interests. It isn't strictly professional, I know, to be tooting for the chance of a client in this way; but I'm obliged to do it in self-defence. Dix, Nawby, Milbury, and Gutteridge, all play into one another's hands, and want to monopolize among 'em the whole doctoring, lawyering, underta-

king, and licensed victualling business of Dibbledean. I've made up my mind to break down Nawby's monopoly, and keep as much business out of his office as I can. That's why I take time by the forelock, and give you my card." Here Mr. Tatt left off explaining, and began to play with his terrier.

Mat looked up thoughtfully at Johanna Grice's cottage. Might she not, in all probability, have left some important letters behind her? And, if he mentioned who he was, could not the wizen man by his side help him to get at them?

"A good deal of mystery about the late Miss Grice," resumed Mr. Tatt, still playing with the terrier. "Nobody but Dix and Nawby can tell exactly when she died, or how she's left her money. Queer family altogether. (Rats, Pincher! where are the rats?) There's a son of old Grice's, who has never, they say, been properly accounted for. (Hie, boy! there's a cat! hie after her, Pincher!) If he was only to turn up now, I believe, between ourselves, it would put the damndest spoke in Nawby's wheel—"

"I may have a question or two to ask you one of these days," interposed Mat, turning away from the garden paling at last. While his new acquaintance had been speaking, he had been making up his mind that he should best serve his purpose of tracing Arthur Carr, by endeavoring forthwith to get all the information that Mrs. Peckover might be able to afford him. In the event of this resource proving useless, there would be plenty of time to return to Dibbledean, discover himself to Mr. Tatt, and ascertain whether the law would not give to Joshua Grice's son the right of examining Johanna Grice's papers.

"Come to my office," cried Mr. Tatt, enthusiastically. "I can give you a prime bit of Sulton, and as good a glass of bitter beer as ever you drank in your life."

Mat declined this hospitable invitation peremptorily, and set forth at once on his return to the station. All Mr. Tatt's efforts to engage him for an "early day," and an "appointed hour," failed. He would only repeat, doggedly, that at some future time he might have a question or two to ask about a matter of law, and that his new acquaintance should then be the man to whom he would apply for information.

They wished each other "good morning" at the entrance of the lane—Mr. Tatt lounging slowly up the High street, with his terrier at his heels; and Mat walking rapidly in the contrary direction, on his way back to the railway station.

As he passed the churchyard, the funeral procession had just arrived at its destination, and the bearers were carrying the coffin from the hearse to the church-door. He



stopped a little by the roadside, to see it go in. "She was no good to anybody about her, all her lifetime," he thought bitterly, as the last heavy fold of the velvet pall was lost to view in the darkness of the church entrance. "But if she'd only lived a day or two longer, she might have been of some good to me. There's more of what I wanted to know nailed down along with her in that coffin, than ever I'm likely to find out anywhere else. It's a long hunt of mine, this is—a long hunt on a dull scent; and her death has made it duller." With this farewell thought, he turned from the church.

As he pursued his way back to the railroad, he took Jane Holdsworth's letter out of his pocket, and looked at the hair enclosed in it. It was the fourth or fifth time he had done this during the few hours that had passed since he had possessed himself of Mary's bracelet. From that period there had grown within him a vague conviction, that the possession of Carr's hair might in some way lead to the discovery of Carr himself. He knew perfectly well that there was not the slightest present or practical use in examining this hair, and yet, there was something that seemed to strengthen him afresh in his purpose, to encourage him anew after his unexpected check at Dibbledean, merely in the act of looking at it. "If I can't track him no other way," he muttered, replacing the hair in his pocket, 'I've got the notion into my head, somehow, that I shall track him by this.'

Mat found it no very easy business to reach Rubbleford. He had to go back a little way on the Dibbledean line—then to diverge by a branch line—and then to get upon another main line, and travel along it some distance before he reached his destination. It was dark by the time he reached Rubbleford. However, by inquiring of one or two people, he easily found the dairy and muffin-shop when he was once in the town; and saw to his great delight that it was not shut up for the night. He looked in at the window, under a plaster-cast of a cow, and observed by the light of one tallow-candle burning inside, a chubby, buxom girl sitting at the counter, and either drawing or writing something on a slate. Entering the shop, after a moment or two of hesitation, he asked if he could see Mrs. Peckover.

"Mother went away, sir, three days ago, to nurse Uncle Bob at Bangbury," answered the girl.

(Here was a second check—a second obstacle to defer the tracing of Arthur Carr! It seemed like a fatality!)

"When do you expect her back?" asked Mat.

"Not for a week or ten days, sir," answered the girl. "Mother said she wouldn't have gone, but for Uncle Bob being her only

brother, and not having wife or child to look after him at Bangbury."

(Bangbury!—Where had he heard that name before?)

"Father's up at the rectory, sir," continued the girl, observing that the stranger looked both disappointed and puzzled. "If it's dairy business you come upon, I can attend to it; but if it's anything about accounts to settle, mother said they were to be sent on to her."

"May be I shall have a letter to send your mother," said Mat, after a moment's consideration. "Can you write me down on a bit of paper where she is?"

"Oh, yes, sir." And the girl very civilly and readily wrote in her best round-hand, on a slip of bill-paper, this address:—"Martha Peckover, at rob: Randle, 2 Dawson's buildings, Bangbury."

Mat absently took the slip of paper from her, and put it into his pocket; then thanked the girl, and went out. While he was inside the shop he had been trying in vain to call to mind where he had heard the name of Bangbury before: the moment he was in the street the lost remembrance came back to him. Surely, Bangbury was the place where Johanna Grice had told him that Mary was buried!

After walking a few paces, he came to a large linendraper's shop, with plenty of light in the window. Stopping here, he hastily drew from his pocket the manuscript containing the old woman's "justification" of her conduct; for he wished to be certain about the accuracy of his recollection, and he had an idea that the part of the narrative which mentioned Mary's death would help to decide him in his present doubt.

Yes! on turning to the last page, there it was written in so many words: "I sent, by a person I could depend on, money enough to bury her decently in Bangbury churchyard."

"I'll go there to-night," said Mat to himself, thrusting the letter into his pocket, and taking the way back to the railway station immediately.

## CHAPTER XIV.

### MARY'S GRAVE.

MATTHEW GRICE was an energetic and a resolute traveller; but neither energy nor resolution is powerful enough to alter the laws of inexorable time-tables to suit the special purposes of individual passengers. Although Mat left Rubbleford in less than an hour after he had arrived there, he only succeeded in getting half-way to Bangbury before he had to stop for the night, and wait at an intermediate station for the first

morning train on what was termed the trunk line. By this main railroad he reached his destination early in the forenoon, and went at once to Dawson's buildings.

"Mrs. Peckover has just stepped out, sir—Mr. Randle being a little better this morning—for a mouthful of fresh air. She'll be in again in half-an-hour," said the maid-of-all-work who opened Mr. Randle's door.

Mat began to suspect that something more than mere accident was concerned in keeping Mrs. Peckover and himself asunder. "I'll come again in half-an-hour," said he—then added, just as the servant was about to shut the door;—"Which is my way to the church?"

Bangbury church was close at hand, and the directions he received for finding it were easy to follow. But when he entered the churchyard, and looked about him anxiously to see where he should begin searching for his sister's grave, his head grew confused, and his heart began to fail him. Bangbury was a large town, and rows and rows of tombstones seemed to fill the churchyard bewilderingly in every visible direction.

At a little distance a man was at work opening a grave, and to him Mat applied for help—describing his sister as a stranger who had been buried somewhere in the churchyard better than twenty years ago. The man was both stupid and surly, and would give no advice, except that it was useless to look near where he was digging, for they were all respectable townspeople buried about there.

Mat walked round to the other side of the church. Here the graves were thicker than ever, for here the poor were buried. He went on slowly through them, with his eyes fixed on the ground, toward some trees which marked the limits of the churchyard—looking out for a place to begin his search in where the graves might be comparatively few, and where his head might not get confused at the outset. Such a place he found at last, in a damp corner under the trees. About this spot the thin grass languished; the mud distilled into tiny waterpools; and the brambles, briars, and dead leaves, lay thickly and foully between a few ragged turf-mounds.—Could they have laid her here? Could this be the last refuge to which Mary ran after she fled from home?

A few of the mounds had stained, mouldering tombstones at their heads. He looked at these first, and, finding only strange names on them, turned next to the mounds marked out by cross-boards of wood. At one of the graves the cross-board had been torn, or had rotted away, from its upright supports, and lay on the ground weather-stained and split, but still faintly showing that it had once had a few letters cut in it. He examined this board to begin with, and was trying to make out what the letters were, when the

sound of some one approaching disturbed him. He looked up, and saw a woman walking slowly toward the very place where he was standing.

It was Mrs. Peckover herself! She had taken a prescription for her sick brother to the chemist's—had bought him one or two little things he wanted, in the High street—and had now, before resuming her place at his bedside, stolen a few minutes to go and look at the grave of Madonna's mother. It was many, many years since Mrs. Peckover had last paid a visit to Bangbury churchyard.

She stopped and hesitated when she first caught sight of Mat; but, after a moment or two, not being a woman easily balked in anything when she had once undertaken to do it, continued to advance, and never paused for the second time until she had come close to the grave by which Mat stood, and was looking him steadily in the face, exactly across it.

He was the first to speak. "Do you know whose grave this is?" he asked.

"Yes, sir," answered Mrs. Peckover—glancing indignantly at the broken board, and the mud and brambles all about it—"yes, sir, I *do* know; and, what's more, I know that it's a disgrace to the parish! Money has been paid twice over to keep it decent; and look what a state it's left in!"

"I asked you whose grave it was," repeated Mat, impatiently.

"A poor, unfortunate, forsaken creature, who's gone to heaven, if ever an afflicted, repenting woman went there yet!" answered Mrs. Peckover, warmly.

"Forsaken? Afflicted? A woman, too?" Mat repeated to himself, thoughtfully.

"Yes, forsaken and afflicted," cried Mrs. Peckover, overhearing him. "Don't you say no ill of her, whoever you are. She sha'n't be spoken unkindly of in my hearing, poor soul!"

Mat looked up suddenly and eagerly. "What's your name?" he inquired.

"My name's Peckover, and I'm not ashamed of it," was the prompt reply. "And, now, if I may make so bold, what's yours?"

Mat took from his pocket the hair bracelet, and, fixing his eyes intently on her face, held it up, across the grave, for her to look at. "Do you know this?" he said.

Mrs. Peckover stooped forward, and closely inspected the bracelet for a minute or two. "Lord save us!" she exclaimed, recognising it, and confronting him with cheeks that had suddenly become colorless, and eyes that stared in terror and astonishment—"Lord save us! how did you come by that? And who, for mercy's sake, are you?"

"My name's Matthew Grice," he answered, quickly and sternly. "This brace-



et belonged to my sister, Mary Grice. She ran away from home, and died, and was buried in Bangbury churchyard. If you know her grave, tell me in plain words—is it here?"

Breathless as she was with astonishment, Mrs. Peckover managed to stammer a faint answer in the affirmative, and to add that the initials "M. G." would be found somewhere on the broken board lying at their feet. She then tried to ask a question or two in her turn; but the words died away in faint exclamations of surprise. "To think of me and you meeting together!" was all she could say; "her own brother, too! Oh, to think of that!—only to think of that!"

Mat looked down at the mud, the brambles, and the rotting grass, that lay over what had once been a living and loving human creature. The dangerous brightness glittered in his eyes, the cold change spread fast over his cheeks, and the scars of the arrow-wounds began to burn redly and more redly, as he whispered to himself: "I'll be even yet, Mary, with the man who laid you here!"

"Does Mr. Blyth know who you are, sir?" asked Mrs. Peckover, hesitating and trembling as she put this question. "Did he give you the bracelet? Did you and him—"

She stopped. Mat was not listening to her. His eyes were fastened on the grave; he was still talking to himself in quick, whispering tones:—

"Her bracelet was hid from me in another man's chest," he said—"I've found her bracelet. Her child was hid from me in another man's house—I've found her child. Her grave was hid from me in a strange churchyard—I've found her grave. The man who laid her in it is hid from me still—I shall find him!"

"Please do listen to me, sir, for one moment," pleaded Mrs. Peckover, more nervously than before. "Does Mr. Blyth know about you? And little Mary—oh, sir, whatever you do, pray, pray, don't take her away from where she is now! You can't mean to do that, sir, though you are her own mother's brother—you can't, surely?"

He looked up at her so quickly, with such a fierce, steady, serpent glitter in his light-gray eyes, that she recoiled a step or two; still pleading, however, with desperate perseverance for an answer to her last question:—

"Only tell me, sir, that you don't mean to take little Mary away, and I won't ask you to say so much as another word! Mr. Blyth was always afraid somebody would turn up; and I always said, 'No, they wouldn't;' and here—(O Lord! O Lord!)—here it's happened at last! But you'll leave her with Mr. and Mrs. Blyth, won't you, sir? For your sister's sake, you'll

leave her with the poor, bed-ridden lady that's been like a mother to her for so many years past?—for your dear, lost sister's sake, that I was with when she died—"

"Tell me about her!" He said those few words with surprising gentleness, as Mrs. Peckover thought, for such a rough-looking man.

"Yes, yes, all you want to know," she answered. "But I can't stop here. There's my brother—I've got such a turn with seeing you, it's almost put him out of my head—there's my brother, that I must go back to, and see if he's asleep still. You just please to come along with me, and wait in the parlor—it's close by—while I step upstairs; and then—" (Here she stopped in great confusion. It seemed like running some desperate risk to ask this strange, stern-featured relation of Mary Grice's into her brother's house.) "And yet," thought Mrs. Peckover, "if I can only soften his heart by telling him about his poor, unfortunate sister, it may make him all the readier to leave little Mary—"

At this point her perplexities were cut short by Matthew himself, who said, shortly, that he had been to Dawson's buildings already to look after her. On hearing this, she hesitated no longer. It was too late to question the propriety or impropriety of admitting him now.

"Come away, then," she said; "don't let's wait no longer. And don't fret about the infamous state they've left things in here," she added, thinking to propitiate him, as she saw his eyes turn once more, at parting, on the broken board and the brambles around the grave. "I know where to go and who to speak to—"

"Go nowhere, and speak to nobody!" he broke in sternly, to her great astonishment. "All what's got to be done to it, I mean to do myself."

"You!"

"Yes, me. It was little enough I ever did for her while she was alive; and it's little enough now, only to make things look decent about the place where she's buried. But I mean to do that much for her; and no other man shall stir a finger to help me."

Roughly as it was spoken, this speech made Mrs. Peckover feel easier about Madonna's prospects. The hard-featured man was, after all, not so hard-hearted as she had thought him at first. She even ventured now to begin questioning him again, as they walked together toward Dawson's buildings.

He varied very much in his manner of receiving her inquiries—replying to some promptly enough, and gruffly refusing, in the plainest terms, to give a word of answer to others. He was quite willing, for example, to admit that he had procured her temporary address at Bangbury from her

daughter at Rubbleford; but he flatly declined to inform her how he had first found out that she lived at Rubbleford at all. Again, he readily admitted that neither Madonna nor Mr. Blyth knew who he really was; but he refused to say why he had not disclosed himself to them, or when he intended—if he ever intended at all—to inform them that he was the brother of Mary Grice. As to getting him to confess in what manner he had become possessed of the hair bracelet, Mrs. Peckover's first question about it, although only answered by a look, was received in such a manner as to show her that any further efforts on her part in that direction would be perfectly fruitless.

On one side of the door, at Dawson's buildings, was Mr. Randle's shop, and on the other was Mr. Randle's little dining-parlor. In this room Mrs. Peckover left Mat, while she went up-stairs to see if her sick brother wanted anything. Finding that he was still quietly sleeping, she only waited to arrange the bedclothes comfortably about him, and to put a hand-bell easily within his reach in case he should awake, and then went down-stairs again immediately.

She found Mat sitting with his elbows on the one little table in the dining-parlor, his head resting on his hands. Upon the table, lying by the side of the bracelet, was the lock of hair out of Jane Holdsworth's letter, which he had yet once more taken from his pocket to look at. "Why, mercy on me!" cried Mrs. Peckover, glancing at it, "surely it's the same hair that's worked into the bracelet! Wherever, for goodness' sake, did you get that?"

"Never mind where I got it. Do you know whose hair it is? No! you don't? Look a little closer. The man this hair belonged to was the man she trusted in—and he laid her in the churchyard for her pains."

"Oh! who was he?—who was he?" asked Mrs. Peckover, eagerly.

"Who was he?" repeated Matthew, sternly. "What do you mean by asking me that?"

"I only mean that I never heard a word about the villain—I don't so much as know his name."

"You don't?" He fastened his eyes suspiciously on her as he said those two words.

"No—as true as I stand here, I don't. Why, I didn't even know that your poor, dear sister's name was Grice till you told me."

His look of suspicion began to change to a look of amazement as he heard this. He hurriedly gathered up the bracelet and the lock of hair, and put them into his pocket again. "Let's hear first how you met with her," he said. "I'll have a word or two with you about the other matter afterward."

Mrs. Peckover sat down near him, and

began to relate the mournful story which she had told to Valentine and Doctor and Mrs. Joyce, now many years ago, in the rectory dining-room. But on this occasion she was not—as on the last—allowed to go through her narrative uninterruptedly. While she was uttering the few simple words which told how she had sat down by the roadside and suckled the half-starved infant of the forsaken and dying Mary Grice, Mat suddenly reached out his heavy, trembling hand, and took fast hold of hers. He gripped it with such force, that, stout-hearted and hardy as she was, she cried out in alarm and pain, "Oh, don't! you hurt me—you hurt me!"

He dropped her hand directly, and turned his face away from her—his breath quickening painfully, his fingers fastening on the side of his chair as if some great pang or oppression was trying him to the quick. She rose and asked anxiously what ailed him; but, even as the words passed her lips, he mastered himself with that iron resolution of his which few trials could bend, and none break, and motioned to her to sit down again. "Don't mind me," he said; "I'm old and tough-hearted with being battered about in the world, and I can't give myself vent now with talking or crying like the rest of you. Never mind; it's all over now. Go on."

She complied, a little nervously at first; but he did not interrupt her again. He listened while she proceeded, looking straight at her; not speaking or moving—except when he winced once or twice, as a man winces under unexpected pain, while Mary's death-bed words were repeated to him. Having reached this stage of her narrative, Mrs. Peckover added little more; only saying, in conclusion: "I took care of the poor soul's child, as I said I would; and did my best to behave like a mother to her, till she got to be ten year old; then I give her up—because it was for her own good—to Mr. Blyth."

(If he had wanted any confirmation of his belief that Madonna was really and truly the child of Mary Grice, here it was. But his convictions on this point had been settled beforehand, and the words Mrs. Peckover had just spoken produced apparently no effect on him.)

"I dare say you know all about what Mr. Blyth has done for her?" continued the good woman; "and about the fall that took her hearing away? Surely, you don't want me to tell how that happened, do you?"

He did not seem to notice this question. The image of the forsaken girl, sitting alone by the roadside, with her child's natural sustenance dried up within her—travel-worn, friendless, and desperate—was still uppermost in his mind; and when he next spoke, gratitude for the help that had been



given to Mary in her last sore distress was the one predominant emotion, which strove roughly to express itself to Mrs. Peckover in his words.

"Is there any living soul you care about, that a trifle of money would do a little good to?" he asked, with such abrupt eagerness, that she was quite startled by it.

"Lord bless me!" she exclaimed, "what do you mean? What has that got to do with your poor sister, or Mr. Blyth, or anything—"

"It's got this to do," burst out Matthew, starting to his feet, as the struggling gratitude within him stirred body and soul both together; "you turned to and helped Mary when she hadn't nobody else in the world to stand by her. She was always father's darling—but father couldn't help her then; and I was away on the wrong side of the sea, and couldn't be no good to her neither. But I'm on the right side, now; and if there's any friends of yours, north, south, east, or west, as would be happier for a trifle of money, here's all mine; catch it, and give it 'em." (He tossed his beaver-skin roll, with the bank-notes in it, into Mrs. Peckover's lap.) "Here's my two hands, that I dursn't take a-hold of yours with for fear of hurting you again" (pacing backward and forward in the little room, and tucking up the cuffs of his coat), "here's my two hands that can work along with any man's. Only give 'em something to do for you, that's all! Give 'em something to make or mend, I don't care what, so long as you—"

"Hush! hush!" interposed Mrs. Peckover, "don't be so dreadful noisy, there's a good man! or you'll wake my brother up-stairs. And, besides, where's the use to make such a stir about what I have done for your sister? Anybody else would have took as kindly to her as I did, seeing what distress she was in, poor soul! Here," she continued, handing him back the beaverskin roll, "here's your money, and thank you for the offer of it. Put it up safe in your pocket again. We manage to keep our heads above water, thank God! and don't want to do no better than that. Put it up in your pocket again, and then I'll make bold to ask you for something else."

"For what?" inquired Mat, looking her eagerly in the face.

"Just for this: that you'll promise not to take little Mary away from Mr. Blyth. Do, pray do promise me you won't?"

"I never thought to take her away," he answered. "Where should I take her to? What could a lonesome old vagabond, like me, do for her? If she's happy where she is—let her stop where she is."

"Lord bless you for saying that!" fervently exclaimed Mrs. Peckover, smiling for the first time, and smoothing out her

gown over her knees with an air of inexpressible relief. "I'm rid of my grand fright now, and I'm getting to breathe again freely, which I haven't once yet been able to do since I first set eyes on you. Ah! you're rough to look at; but you've got your feelings like the rest of us. Talk away now as much as you like. Ask me about anything you please, and—"

"What's the good?" he broke in, gloomily. "You don't know what I wanted you to know. I come down here for to find out the man as once owned this" (he pulled the lock of hair out of his pocket again), "and you can't help me. I didn't believe it when you first said so, but I do now."

"Well, thank you for saying that much though you might have put it civiler—"

"His name was Arthur Carr. Did you never hear tell of anybody with the name of Arthur Carr?"

"No; never—never till this very moment."

"The painter-man will know," continued Mat, talking more to himself than to Mrs. Peckover. "I must go back, and chance it with the painter-man, after all."

"Painter-man?" repeated Mrs. Peckover. "Painter? Surely you don't mean Mr. Blyth?"

"Yes, I do."

"Why! what in the name of fortune can you be thinking of? How should Mr. Blyth know more than me? He never set eyes on little Mary till she was ten year old; and he knows nothing about her poor unfortunate mother except what I told him."

These words seemed at first to stupefy Mat: they burst upon him in the shape of a revelation for which he was totally unprepared. It had never once occurred to him to doubt that Valentine was secretly informed of all that he most wished to know. He had looked forward to what the painter might be persuaded—or, in the last resort, forced—to tell him, as the one certainty on which he might finally depend; and here was this fancied security exposed, in a moment, as the wildest delusion that ever man trusted in! What resource was left? To return to Dibbledean, and, by the legal help of Mr. Tatt, to possess himself of any fragments of evidence which Johanna Grice might have left behind her in writing? This seemed but a broken reed to depend on; and yet nothing else now remained.

"I shall find him! I don't care where he's hid away from me, I shall find him yet," thought Mat, still holding with dogged and desperate obstinacy to his first superstition, in spite of every fresh sign that appeared to confute it.

"But why worrit yourself about finding Arthur Carr at all?" pursued Mrs. Peckover, noticing his perplexed and mortified

expression. "The wretch is dead, most likely, by this time—"

"*I'm not dead!*" retorted Mat, fiercely; "and *you're* not dead; and you and me are as old as him. Don't tell me he's dead again! I say he's alive; and, by G—d, I'll be even with him!"

"Oh, don't talk so, don't! It's shocking to hear you and see you," said Mrs. Peckover, recoiling from the expression of his eye at that moment, just as she had recoiled from it already over Mary's grave. "Suppose he is alive, why should you go taking vengeance into your own hands after all these years? Your poor sister's happy in heaven; and her child's took care of by the kindest people, I do believe, that ever drew breath in this world. Why should you want to be even with him now? If he has been punished already, I'll answer for it he will be—in the next world, if not in this. Don't talk about it, or think about it any more, that's a good man! Let's be friendly and pleasant together again—like we were just now—for Mary's sake. Tell me where you've been to all these years. How is it you've never turned up before? That's what I want so particularly to know. Come! tell me, do."

She ended by speaking to him in much the same tone which she would have made use of to soothe a fractious child. But her instinct as a woman guided her truly: in venturing on that little reference to "Mary," she had not ventured in vain. It quieted him, and turned aside the current of his thoughts into the better and smoother direction. "Didn't she never talk to you about having a brother as was away aboard ship?" he asked, anxiously.

"No. She wouldn't say a word about any of her friends, and she didn't say a word about you. But how did you come to be so long away? that's what I want to know," said Mrs. Peckover, pertinaciously repeating her question, partly out of curiosity, partly out of the desire to keep him from returning to the dangerous subject of Arthur Carr.

"I was always a d——d bad 'un, I was," said Matthew meditatively. "There was no keeping of me straight, try it anyhow you like. I bolted from home, I bolted from school, I bolted from aboard ship—"

"Why? What for?"

"Partly because I was a d——d bad 'un, and partly because of a letter I picked up in port, at the Brazils, at the end of a long cruise. Here's the letter—but it's no good showing it to you: the paper's so grimed and tore about you can't read it."

"Who wrote it? Mary?"

"No: father—saying what had happened to Mary, and telling me not to come back home till things was pulled straight again. Here—here's what he said—under the big

grease-spot: 'If you can get continued employment anywhere abroad,' he said, 'accept it instead of coming back.' Then he said again—(down here; 't'other side of where the paper's tore); 'Better for you at your age, to be spared the sight of such sorrow as we are now suffering.' Do you see that?"

"Yes, yes, I see. Ah, poor man! he couldn't give no kinder nor better advice and you—"

"Deserted from my ship. The devil was in me to be off on the tramp, and father's letter did the rest. I got wild and desperate with the thought of what had happened to Mary, and with knowing they were ashamed to see me back again at home. So the night afore the ship sailed for England I slipped into a shore-boat, and turned my back on salt-junk and the boatswain's mate for the rest of my life."

"You don't mean to say you've done nothing but wander about in foreign parts from that time to this?"

"I do, though! I'd a notion I should be shot for a deserter if I turned up too soon in my own country. That kep' me away for ever so long, to begin with. Then tramps' fever got into my head; and there was an end of it."

"Tramps' fever! Mercy on me! what do you mean?"

"I mean this: when a man turns gipsy on his own account, as I did; and tramps about through cold and hot, and winter and summer, not caring where he goes or what the h—ll becomes of him, that sort of life ends by getting into his head, just like liquor does—except that it don't get out again. It got into my head. It's in it now. Tramps' fever kep' me away in the wild country. Tramps' fever will take me back there afore long. Tramps' fever will lay me down, some day, in the lonesome places, with my hand on my rifle and my face to the sky; and I sha'n't get up again till the crows and vultures come and carry me off piecemeal."

"Lord bless us! how can you talk about yourself in that way?" cried Mrs. Peckover, shuddering at the grim image which Mat's last words suggested. "You're trying to make yourself out worse than you are. Surely, you must have thought of your father and sister, sometimes—didn't you?"

"Think of them? Of course I did. But, mind ye, there come a time when I as good as forgot them altogether. They seemed to get smeared out of my head—like we used to smear old sums off our slates at school."

"More shame for you! Whatever else you forgot, you oughtn't to have forgotten—"

"Wait a bit. Father's letter told me—I'd show you the place only I know you couldn't read it—that he was a going to



ook after Mary, and bring her back home, and forgive her. He'd done that twice for me, when I run away; so I didn't doubt but what he'd do it just the same for her. 'She'll pull through her scrape with father just as I used to pull through mine'—was what I thought. And so she would, if her own kin hadn't turned against her; if father's own sister hadn't—"He stopped; the frown gathered on his brow, and the oath burst from his lips, as he thought of Johanna Grice's share in preventing Mary's restoration to her home.

"There! there!" interposed Mrs. Peckover, soothingly. "Talk about something pleasanter. Let's hear how you come back to England."

"I can't rightly fix it when Mary first begun to drop out of my head like," Mat continued, abstractedly pursuing his previous train of recollections. "I used to think of her often enough, when I started for my run in the wild country. That was the time, mind ye, when I had clear notions about coming back home. I got her a scarlet pouch and another feather plaything then, knowing she was fond of knick-knacks, and making it out in my own mind that we two was sure to meet together again. It must have been a longish while after that, afore I got ashamed to go home. But I did get ashamed. Thinks I, 'I haven't a rap in my pocket to show father, after being away all this time. I'm getting summit of a savage to look at already; and Mary would be more frightened than pleased to see me as I am now. I'll wait a bit,' says I, 'and see if I can't keep from tramping about, and try and get a little money, by doing some decent sort of work, afore I go home.' I was nigh about a good ten days' march then from any seaport where honest work could be got for such as me; but I'd fixed to try, and I did try, and got work in a ship-builder's yard. It wasn't no good. Tramps' fever was in my head, and in two days more I was off again to the wild country, with my gun over my shoulder, just as d—d a vagabond as ever."

Mrs. Peckover held up her hands in mute amazement. Matthew, without taking notice of the action, went on, speaking partly to her and partly to himself.

"It must have been about that time when Mary and father, and all what had to do with them, begun to drop out of my head. But I kep' them two knick-knacks, which was once meant for presents for her—long after I'd lost all clear notion of ever going back home again, I kep' 'em—from first to last I kep' 'em—I can't hardly say why; unless it was that I'd got so used to keeping of them that I hadn't the heart somehow to let 'em go. Not, mind ye, but what they mightn't now and then have set me thinking of father and Mary at home—at

times, you know, when I changed 'em from one bag to another, or took and blew the dust off of 'em, for to keep 'em as nice as I could. But the older I got, the worse I got at calling anything to mind in a clear way about Mary and the old country. There seemed to be a sort of fog rolling up between us, now. I couldn't see her face clear, in my own mind, no longer. It come upon me once or twice in dreams, when I nodded alone over my fire after a tough day's march—it come upon me at such times so clear, that it startled me up, all in a cold sweat, wild and puzzled with not knowing at first whether the stars was shimmering down at me in father's paddock at Dibble-dean, or in the lonesome places over the sea, hundreds of miles away from any living soul. But that was only dreams, you know. Waking, I was all astray now, whenever I fell a-thinking about father or her. The longer I tramped it over the lonesome places, the thicker that fog got which seemed to have rose up in my mind between me and them I'd left at home. At last, it come to darken in altogether; and never lifted no more that I can remember, till I crossed the seas again, and got back to my own country."

"But how did you ever think of coming back, after all those years?" asked Mrs. Peckover.

"Well, I got a good heap of money, for once in a way, with digging for gold in California," he answered; "and my mate that I worked with, he says to me one day—'I don't see my way to how we are to spend our money, now we've got it, if we stop here. What can we treat ourselves to in this place, except bad brandy and cards? Let's go over to the old country, where there ain't nothing we want that we can't get for our money; and, when it's all gone, let's turn tail again, and work for more.' He wrought upon me, like that, till I went back with him. We quarrelled aboard ship; and when we got into port, he went his way and I went mine. Not, mind ye, that I started off at once for the old place as soon as I was ashore. That fog in my mind, I told you of, seemed to lift a little when I heard my own language, and saw my own country-people's faces about me again. And then there come a sort of fear over me—a fear of going back home at all, after the time I'd been away. I got over it, though, and went in a day or two. When I first laid my hand on the churchyard gate that Mary and me used to swing on, and when I looked up at the old house, with the gable-ends just what they used to be (though the front was new painted, and strange names was over the shopdoor), then all my time in the wild country seemed to shrivel up somehow, and better than twenty year ago begun to be a'most like yesterday. I'd seen

father's name in the churchyard—which was no more than I looked for: but when they told me Mary had never been brought back, and said she'd died many a year ago among strange people, they cut me to the quick."

"Ah! no wonder, no wonder!"

"It was a wonder to *me*, though. I should have laughed at any man, if he'd told me I should be took so at hearing what I heard about her, after all the time I'd been away. I couldn't make it out then, and I can't now. I didn't feel like my own man, when I first set eyes on the old place. And then to hear she was dead—it cut me, as I told you. It cut me deeper still, when I come to tumble over the things she'd left behind her in her box. Twenty year ago got nigher and nigher to yesterday with every fresh thing belonging to her that I laid a hand on. There was an arbor in father's garden she used to be fond of working in of evenings. I'd lost all thought of that place for more years than I can reckon up. I called it to mind again—and called her to mind again, too, sitting and working and singing in the arbor—only with laying hold of a bit of patchwork stuff in the bottom of her box, with her needle and thread left sticking in it."

"Ah, dear, dear!" sighed Mrs. Peckover, "I wish I'd seen her then! She was as happy, I dare say, as the bird on the tree. But there's one thing I can't exactly make out yet," she added—"how did you first come to know all about Mary's child?"

"All! There wasn't no *all* in it, till I see the child herself. Except knowing that the poor creater's baby had been born alive, I knowed nothing when I first come away from the old place in the country. Child! I hadn't nothing of the sort in my mind, when I got back to London. It was how to track the man as was Mary's death, that I puzzled and worried about in my head, at that time—"

"Yes, yes," said Mrs. Peckover, interposing to keep him away from the dangerous subject, as she heard his voice change, and saw his eyes begin to brighten again. "Yes, yes—but how did you come to see the child? Tell me that."

"Zack took me into the painter man's big room—"

"Zack! Why, good gracious heavens! do you mean Master Zachary Thorpe?"

"I see a young woman standing among a lot of people as was all a staring at her," continued Mat, without noticing the interruption. "I see her just as close to, and as plain, as I see you. I see her look up, all of a sudden, front face to front face with me. A creeping and a crawling went through me; and I says to myself, 'Mary's child has lived to grow up, and that's her.'"

"But, do pray tell me, how ever you come to know Master Zack?"

"I says to myself, 'That's her,'" repeated Mat, his rough voice sinking lower and lower, his attention wandering farther and farther away from Mrs. Peckover's interruptions. "Twenty year ago had got to be like yesterday, when I was down at the old place; and things I hadn't called to mind for long times past, I called to mind when I come to the churchyard gate, and see father's house. But there was looks Mary had with her eyes, turns Mary had with her head, bits of twitches Mary had with her eyebrows when she looked up at you, that I'd clean forgot. They all come back to me together, as soon as ever I see that young woman's face."

"And do you really never mean to let her know who you are? You may tell me that, surely—though you won't speak a word about Master Zack."

"When I'm going back to the wild country, I may say to her: 'Rough as I am to look at, I'm your mother's brother, and you're the only bit of my own flesh and blood I've got left to cotton to in all the world. Give us a shake of your hand, and a kiss for mother's sake; and I won't trouble you no more.' I *may* say that, afore I go back, and lose sight of her for good and all."

"Oh, but you won't go back. Only you tell Mr. Blyth you don't want to take her away, and then say to him, 'I'm Mr. Grice, and—'"

"Stop! Don't you get a-talking about Mr. Grice."

"Why not? It's your lawful name, isn't it?"

"Lawful enough, I dare say. But I don't like the sound of it, though it *is* mine. Father as good as said he was *ashamed* to own it, when he wrote me that letter; and I was *afraid* to own it, when I deserted from my ship. Bad luck has followed the name from first to last. I ended with it years ago, and I won't take up with it again now. Call me 'Mat.' Take it as easy with me as if I was kin to you."

"Well, then—Mat," said Mrs. Peckover with a smile, "I've got such a many things to ask you still—"

"I wish you could make it out to ask them to-morrow," rejoined Matthew. "I've overdone myself already, with more talking than I'm used to. I want to be quiet with my tongue, and get to work with my hands for the rest of the day. You don't happen to have a foot-rule in the house, do you?"

On being asked to explain what motive could possibly induce him to make this strangely abrupt demand for a foot-rule, Mat immediately admitted that he was anxious to proceed at once to the renewal of the crossboard at the head of his sister's



grave. He wanted the rule to measure the dimensions of the old board; he desired to be directed to some timber-merchant's, where he could buy a new piece of wood; and, after that, he would worry Mrs. Peckover, he said, about nothing more. Extraordinary as his present caprice appeared to her, the good woman saw that it had taken complete possession of him, and wisely and willingly set herself to humor it. She procured for him the rule and the address of a timber-merchant; and then they parted, Mat promising to call again in the evening at Dawson's buildings.

When he presented himself at the timber-merchant's, after having carefully measured the old board in the churchyard, he came in no humor to be easily satisfied. Never was any fine lady more difficult to decide about the texture, pattern, and color, to be chosen for a new dress, than Mat was when he arrived at the timber-merchant's, about the grain, thickness, and kind of wood to be chosen for the cross-board at the head of Mary's grave. At last, he selected a piece of walnut-wood, and, having paid the price demanded for it, without any haggling, inquired next for a carpenter, of whom he might hire a set of tools. A man who has money to spare, has all things at his command. Before evening, Mat had a complete set of tools, a dry shed to use them in, and a comfortable living-room at a public-house near, all at his own sole disposal.

Being skillful enough at all carpenter's work of an ordinary kind, he would, under most circumstances, have completed in a day or two such an employment as he had now undertaken. But a strange fastidiousness, a most uncharacteristic anxiety about the smallest matters, delayed him through every stage of his present undertaking. Mrs. Peckover, who came every morning to see how he was getting on, was amazed at the slowness of his progress. He was, from the first, morbidly scrupulous in keeping the board smooth and clean. After he had shaped it, and fitted it to its upright supports; after he had cut in it (by Mrs. Peckover's advice) the same inscription which had been placed on the old board—the simple initials “M. G.,” with the year of Mary's death, “1828”—after he had done these things, he was seized with an unreasonable, obstinate fancy for decorating the board at the sides. In spite of all that Mrs. Peckover could say to prevent him, he carved an anchor at one side, and a tomahawk at the other—these being the objects with which he was most familiar, and therefore the objects which he chose to represent. But even when the carving of his extraordinary ornaments had been completed, he could not be prevailed on to set the new cross-board up in its proper place. Fondly as

artists or authors linger over their last, loving touches to the picture or the book, did Mat now linger, day after day, over the poor monument to his sister's memory which his own rough hands had made: he smoothed it carefully with bits of sand-paper, he rubbed it industriously with leather, he polished it anxiously with oil, until at last Mrs. Peckover lost all patience, and, trusting in the influence she had already gained over him, fairly insisted on his bringing his work to a close. Even while obeying her, he was still true to his first resolution. He had said that no man's hand should help him in the labor he had now undertaken; and he was as good as his word, for he carried the cross-board himself to the churchyard.

All this time, he never once looked at that lock of hair which he had been accustomed to take so frequently from his pocket but a few days back. Perhaps there was nothing in common between the thought of tracing Arthur Carr and the thoughts of Mary, that came to him while he was at work on the walnut-wood plank.

But when the cross-board had been set up; when he had cleared away the mud and brambles about the mound, and had made a smooth little path round it; when he had looked at his work from all points of view, and had satisfied himself that he could do nothing more to perfect it, the active, restless, and violent elements in his nature seemed to awake, as it were, on a sudden. His fingers began to search again in his pocket for the fatal lock of hair; and when he and Mrs. Peckover next met, the first words he addressed to her announced his immediate departure for Dibledean.

She had strengthened her hold on his gratitude by getting him permission, through the rector of Bangbury, to occupy himself, without molestation, in the work of repairing his sister's grave. She had persuaded him to confide to her many of the particulars concerning himself which he had refused to communicate at their first interview. But when she tried, at parting, to fathom what his ultimate intentions really were, now that he was leaving Bangbury with the avowed purpose of discovering Arthur Carr, she failed to extract from him a single sentence of explanation, or even so much as a word of reply. When he took his farewell, he charged her not to communicate their meeting to Mr. Blyth till she heard from him or saw him again; and he tried once more to thank her in as fit words as he could command, for the pity and kindness she had shown toward Mary Grice; but, to the very last, he closed his lips resolutely on the ominous subject of Arthur Carr.

He had been a fortnight absent from London, when he set forth once more for Dibledean, to try that last chance of tracing

out the hidden man which might be afforded him by a search among the papers of Johanna Grice.

The astonishment and delight of Mr. Tatt when Matthew, appearing in the character of a client at the desolate office-door, actually announced himself as the sole surviving son of old Joshua Grice, flowed out in such a sudden torrent of congratulatory words, that Mat was at first literally overwhelmed by them. He soon recovered himself, however; and while Mr. Tatt was still halinguishing fluently about proving his client's identity, and securing his client's rights of inheritance, silenced that ardent and neglected solicitor, by declaring, as bluntly as usual, that he had not come to Dibbledean to be helped to get hold of money, but to be helped to get hold of Johanna's Grice's papers. This extraordinary announcement produced a long explanation and a still longer discussion, in the middle of which Mat lost his patience, and declared that he would set aside all legal obstacles and delays forthwith, by going to Mr. Nawby's office, and demanding of that gentleman, as the official guardian of the late Miss Grice's papers, permission to look over the different documents which the old woman might have left behind her.

It was to no earthly purpose that Mr. Tatt represented this course of proceeding as unprofessional, injudicious, against etiquette, and generally ruinous, looked at from any point of view. While he was still expostulating, Matthew was stepping out at the door; and Mr. Tatt, who could not afford to lose even this most outrageous and unmanageable of clients, had no other alternative but to make the best of it, and run out after him.

Mr. Nawby was a remarkably lofty, solemn, and ceremonious gentleman, feeling as bitter a hatred and scorn for Mr. Tatt as it is well possible for one legal human being to entertain toward another. There is no doubt that he would have received the highly irregular visit of which he was now the object with the most chilling contempt, if he had only been allowed time to assert his own dignity. But before he could utter a single word, Matthew, in defiance of all that Mr. Tatt could say to silence him, first announced himself in his proper character; and then, after premising that he came to worry nobody about money-matters, coolly added that he wanted to look over the late Johanna Grice's letters and papers directly, for a purpose which was not of the smallest consequence to any one but himself.

Under ordinary circumstances, Mr. Nawby would have simply declined to hold any communication with Mat, until his identity had been legally proved. But the great and prosperous solicitor of Dibbledean had a grudge against the audacious adventurer

who had set up in practice against him, and he therefore resolved to depart a little on this occasion from the strictly professional course, for the express purpose of depriving Mr. Tatt of as many prospective six-and-eight-pences as possible. Waving his hand solemnly, when Mat had done speaking, he said, "Wait a moment, sir;" then rang a bell, and ordered in his head-clerk.

"Now, Mr. Scutt," said Mr. Nawby, loftily addressing the clerk, "have the goodness to be a witness, in the first place, that I protest against this visit on Mr. Tatt's part, as being indecorously unprofessional and grossly unbusiness-like. In the second place, be a witness also that I do not admit the identity of this party" (pointing to Mat), "and that what I am now about to say to him I say under protest, and denying *pro forma* that he is the party he represents himself to be. You understand, Mr. Scutt?"

Mr. Scutt bowed reverently. Mr. Nawby pompously went on:—

"If your business connection, sir, with that party," he said, addressing Matthew and indicating Mr. Tatt, "was only entered into to forward the purpose you have just mentioned to me, I beg to inform you (denying, you will understand, at the same time, your right to ask for such information) that you may wind up matters with your solicitor whenever you please. The late Miss Grice has left neither letters nor papers. I destroyed them all, by her own wish, in her own presence, and under her own written authority, during her last illness. My head-clerk here, who was present to assist me, will corroborate the statement, if you wish it."

Mat listened attentively to these words, but listened to nothing more. A sturdy legal altercation immediately ensued between the two solicitors—but it hardly reached his ears. Mr. Tatt took his arm, and let him out, talking more fluently than ever; but he had not the poorest trifle of attention to bestow on Mr. Tatt. All his faculties together seemed to be absorbed by this one momentous consideration: Had he now, really and truly, lost the last chance of tracing Arthur Carr?

When they got into the High street, his mind somewhat recovered its freedom of action, and he began to feel the necessity of deciding at once on his future movements. Now that his final resource had failed him, what should he do next? It was useless to go back to Bangbury, useless to remain at Dibbledean. Yet the fit was on him to be moving again somewhere—better even to return to Kirk street than to remain irresolute and inactive on the scene of his defeat.

He stopped suddenly, and saying—"It is no good waiting here now: I shall go back to London"—impatiently shook himself free of Mr. Tatt's arm in a moment. He found



t by no means so easy, however, to shake himself free of Mr. Tatt's legal services. "Depend on my zeal," cried this energetic solicitor, following Matthew pertinaciously on his way to the station. "If there's law in England, your identity shall be proved, and your rights respected. I intend to throw myself into this case, heart and soul. Money, justice, morality, and— One moment, my dear sir! If you must really go back to London, oblige me, at any rate, with your address; and just state, in a cursory way, whether you were christened or not at Dibledean church. I want nothing more to begin with—absolutely nothing more—on my word of honor as a professional man."

Willing in his present mood to say or do anything to get rid of his volunteer solicitor, Mat mentioned his address in Kirk street, and the name by which he was known there—impatiently said "Yes" to the inquiry as to whether he had been christened at Dibledean church—and then, abruptly turning away, left Mr. Tatt standing in the middle of the high-road, excitably making a note of the evidence just collected, in a new legal memorandum-book.

As soon as Mat was alone, the ominous question suggested itself to him again: Had he lost the last chance of tracing Arthur Carr? Although inexorable facts seemed now to prove past contradiction that he had, even yet he held to his old superstition more doggedly and desperately than ever. Once more, on his way to the station, he pulled out the lock of hair, and obstinately pondered over it. Once more, while he journeyed to London, that strange conviction upheld him which had already supported him under previous checks. "I shall find him," thought Mat, whirling along in the train. "I don't care where he's hid away from me, I shall find him yet!"

## CHAPTER XV.

### THE TRACING OF ARTHUR CARR.

WHILE Matthew Grice was travelling backward and forward between town and town in the midland counties, the life led by his gallant young friend and comrade in the metropolis was by no means totally devoid of incident and change. Zack had met with his adventures as well as Mat; one of them, in particular, being of such a nature—or, rather, leading to such results—as materially altered the domestic aspect of the lodgings in Kirk street.

True to his promise to Valentine, Zack, on the morning of his friend's departure for the country, presented himself at Mr. Strather's house, with his letter of introduction, punctually at eleven o'clock; and was fairly

started in life by that gentleman, before noon on the same day, as a student of the classic beau-ideal in the statue-halls of the British Museum. He worked away resolutely enough till the rooms were closed; and then returned to Kirk street, not by any means enthusiastically devoted to his new occupation, but determined to persevere in it, because he was determined to keep to his word.

His new profession wore, however, a much more encouraging aspect when Mr. Strather introduced him, in the evening, to the Little Bilge street academy. Here, live people were the models to study from. Here he was free to use the palette, and to mix up the pinkest imaginable flesh-tints with bran-new brushes. Here were high-spirited students of the fine arts, easy in manners and picturesque in personal appearance, with whom he contrived to get intimate directly. And here, to crown all, was a model, sitting for the chest and arms, who had been a great prize-fighter, and with whom Zack joyfully cemented the bonds of an eternal (pugilistic) friendship, on the first night of his admission to Mr. Strather's academy.

All through the second day of his probation as a student, he labored at his drawing with immense resolution and infinitesimal progress. All through the evening he daubed away industriously under Mr. Strather's supervision, until the academy sitting was suspended. It would have been well for him if he had gone home as soon as he laid down his brushes. But in an evil hour he lingered in Little Bilge street, after the studies of the evening were over, to have a gossip with the prize-fighting model, and in an indiscreet moment he consented to officiate as one of the patrons at an exhibition of sparring, to be held that night at a neighboring tavern, for the ex-pugilist's benefit.

By no part of their conduct do the gentlemen connected with the prize-ring show their freedom and independence of spirit more remarkably, than by their behavior under that patronage for which they are incessantly clamoring, and which, when they get it, they usually study to deserve by picking a patron's pockets, knocking a patron's hat over his eyes, or subjecting a patron generally to almost every known variety of bodily ill-usage. Zack was not destined to escape paying the customary penalty for the privilege and honor of patronizing a mixed society of prize-fighters. After being conducted in an orderly manner enough for some little time, the pugilistic proceedings of the evening were suddenly interrupted by one of the patrons present (who was also a student at the Bilge street academy), declaring that his pocket had been picked, and insisting that the room-

door should be closed and the police summoned immediately. Great confusion and disturbance ensued, amid which Zack supported the demand of his fellow-student—perhaps a little too warmly. At any rate a gentleman sitting opposite to him, with a patch over one eye, and a nose broken in three places, swore that young Thorpe had personally insulted him by implying that he was a thief, and vindicated his moral character by throwing a cheese-plate at Zack's head. The missile struck the mark (at the side, however, instead of in front), and breaking when it struck, inflicted what appeared to every unprofessional eye that looked at the injury like a very extensive and dangerous wound.

The chemist to whom Zack was taken in the first instance to be bandaged, thought little of the hurt; but the local doctor who was called in, after the lad's removal to Kirk street, did not take so reassuring a view of the patient's case. The wound was certainly not situated in a very dangerous part of the head; but it had been inflicted at a time when Zack's naturally full-blooded constitution was in a very unhealthy condition, from the effects of much more ardent spirit-drinking than was at all good for him. Bad fever-symptoms set in immediately, and appearances became visible in the neighborhood of the wound, at which the medical head shook ominously. In short, Zack was now confined to his bed, with the worst illness he had ever had in his life, and with no friend to look after him except the landlady of the house.

Fortunately for him, his doctor was a man of skill and energy, who knew how to make the most of all the advantages which the patient's youth and strength could offer to assist the medical treatment. In ten days' time, young Thorpe was out of danger of any of the serious inflammatory results which had been apprehended from the injury to his head.

Wretchedly weak and reduced—unwilling to alarm his mother by informing her of his illness—without Valentine to console him, or Mat to amuse him, Zack's spirits now sank to a far lower ebb than they had ever fallen to before. In his present state of depression, feebleness, and solitude, there were moments when he doubted of his own recovery, in spite of all that the doctor could tell him. While in this frame of mind, the remembrance of the last sad report he had heard of his father's health, affected him very painfully, and he bitterly condemned himself for never having written so much as a line to ask Mr. Thorpe's pardon since he had left home. He was too weak to use the pen himself; but the tobacconist's wife—a slovenly, showy, kind-hearted woman enough—was always ready to do anything to serve him; and he determined to make

his mind a little easier by asking her to write a few penitent lines for him, and having the letter despatched immediately to his father's address in Baregrove square. She had long since been made the confidant of all his domestic tribulations (for he freely communicated them to everybody with whom he was brought much in contact), and showed, therefore, no surprise, but on the contrary expressed great satisfaction when his request was preferred to her. This was the letter which Zack, with tearful eyes, and faltering voice, dictated to his landlady:—

“MY DEAR FATHER: I am truly sorry for never having written to ask you to forgive me before. I write now, and beg your pardon with all my heart, for I am indeed very penitent, and ashamed of myself. If you will only let me have another trial, and will not be too hard upon me at first, I will do my best never to give you any more trouble. Therefore, pray, write to me at 14 Kirk street, Wendover market, where I am now living with a friend who has been very kind to me. Please, give my dear love to mother, and believe me your truly penitent son,  
“Z. THORPE, JR.”

Having got through this letter pretty easily, and finding that the tobacconist's wife was quite ready to write another for him, if he pleased, Zack resolved to send a line to Mr. Blyth, who, as well as he could calculate, might now be expected to return from the country every day. On the evening when he had been brought home with the wound in his head, he had entreated that his accident might be kept a secret from Mrs. Blyth (who knew his address), in case she should send after him. This preliminary word of caution was not uselessly spoken. Only three days later a note was brought from Mrs. Blyth, upbraiding him for never having been near the house during Valentine's absence, and asking him to come and drink tea that evening. The messenger, who waited for an answer, was sent back with the most artful verbal excuse which the landlady could provide for the emergency, and no more notes had been delivered since. Mrs. Blyth was doubtless not over well satisfied with the cool manner in which her invitation had been received.

In his present condition of spirits, Zack's conscience upbraided him soundly for having thought of deceiving Valentine by keeping him in ignorance of what had happened. Now that Mat seemed, by his long absence, to have deserted Kirk street for ever, there was a double attraction and hope for the weary and heartsick Zack in the prospect of seeing the painter's genial face by his bedside. To this oldest, kindest, and most merciful of friends, therefore, he determined



to confess, what he dare not so much as hint to his own father.

The note which, by the assistance of the tobacconist's wife, he now addressed to Valentine, was as characteristically boyish, and even childish in tone, as the note he had dictated to send to his father. It ran thus:—

"MY DEAR BLYTH: I begin almost to wish that I had never been born; for I have got into another scrape, having been knocked on the head by a prize-fighter with a cheese-plate. It was wrong in me to go where I did, I know. But I went to Mr. Strather, just as you told me, and stuck to my drawing—I did, indeed! Pray do come, as soon as ever you get back—I send this letter to make sure of getting you at once. I am so miserable and lonely, and too weak still to get out of bed.

"My landlady is very good and kind to me; but, as for that old vagabond, Mat, he has been away in the country, I don't know how long, and has never written to me. Please, please do come! and don't blow me up much if you can help it, for I am so weak still I can hardly keep from crying when I think of what has happened. Ever yours,

"Z. THORPE, jr.

"P.S. If you have got any of my money left by you, I should be very glad if you would bring it. I haven't a farthing, and there are several little things I ought to pay for."

This letter, and the letter to Mr. Thorpe, after being duly sealed and directed, were confided for delivery to a private messenger. They were written on the same day which had been occupied by Matthew Grice in visiting Mr. Tatt and Mr. Nawby, at Dibledean. And the coincidences of time so ordered it, that while Zack's letters were proceeding to their destinations, in the hand of the messenger, Zack's fellow-lodger was also proceeding to *his* destination in Kirk street, by the fast London train.

Baregrove square was nearer to the messenger than Valentine's house, so the first letter that he delivered was that all-important petition for the paternal pardon, on the favorable reception of which depended Zack's last chance of reconciliation with home.

Mr. Thorpe sat alone in his dining-parlor—the same dining-parlor in which, so many weary years ago, he had argued with old Mr. Goodworth, about his son's education. Mrs. Thorpe, being confined to her room by a severe cold, was unable to keep him company—the doctor had just taken leave of him—friends in general were forbidden, on medical authority, to excite him by visits—he was left lonely, and he had the prospect of remaining lonely for the rest of the day. On the table beneath him was

placed one of his volumes of autographs. He had evidently been looking over it to see if it wanted any cleansing or repairing, for his little bottle of gum-water, his camel's-hair brush, and his magnifying-glass, all lay within reach. That total prostration of the nervous system, from which the doctor had declared him to be now suffering, showed itself painfully from time to time, in his actions as well as his looks—in his sudden startings when an unexpected noise occurred in the house, and in the trembling of his wan, yellowish-white hand whenever he lifted it from the table, as well as in the transparent paleness of his cheeks, and the anxious uncertainty of his ever-wandering eyes.

His attention was just now no longer directed on his volume of autographs. He was looking down at an open letter lying near it—a letter fitted to encourage and console him, if any earthly hopes could still speak of happiness to his heart, or any earthly solace still administer repose to his mind.

But a few days back, his wife's entreaties and the doctor's advice had at length prevailed on him to consult his health and increase his chances of recovery, by resigning the post of secretary to one of the religious societies to which he belonged. The letter he was now looking at, had been written officially to inform him that the members of the society accepted his resignation with the deepest regret, and the most fervent hopes for his recovery, and to prepare him for a visit on the morrow from a deputation charged to present him with an address and testimonial, unanimously voted by the society "in grateful and affectionate recognition of his high character and eminent services, while acting as their secretary." He had not been able to resist the temptation of showing this letter to the doctor; and he could not refrain from reading it once again now, before he put it back in his desk. It was, in his eyes, the great reward and the great distinction of his life.

He was still lingering thoughtfully over the last sentence, when Zack's letter was brought in to him. It was only for a moment that he had dared to taste again the sweetness of a well-won triumph—but even in that moment, there mingled with it the poisoning bitter of every past association that could pain him most!—With a heavy sigh, he put away the letter from the friends who honored him, and prepared to answer the letter from the son who had deserted him.

There was grief, but no anger in his face, as he read it over for the second time. He sat thinking for a little while—then drew toward him his inkstand and paper—hesitated—wrote a few lines—and paused again, putting down the pen this time, and cover-

ing his eyes with his thin trembling hand. After sitting thus for some minutes, he seemed to despair of being able to collect his thoughts immediately, and to resolve on giving his mind full time to compose itself. He shut up his son's letter and his own unfinished reply together in the paper-case. But there was some reassuring promise for Zack's future prospects contained even in the little that he had already written; and the letter suggested forgiveness at the very outset, for it began with, "My dear Zachary."

On delivering the second note at Valentine's house, the messenger was informed that Mr. Blyth was expected back on the next day, or on the day after that, at the latest. Having a discretionary power to deal as she pleased with her husband's correspondence, when he was away from home, Mrs. Blyth opened the letter as soon as it was taken up to her. Madonna was in the room at the time, with her bonnet and shawl on, just ready to go out for her usual daily walk, with Patty the housemaid for a companion, in Valentine's absence.

"Oh, that wretched, wretched Zack!" exclaimed Mrs. Blyth, looking seriously distressed and alarmed, the moment her eyes fell on the first lines of the letter. "He must be ill indeed," she added, looking closely at the handwriting; "for he has evidently not written this himself."

Madonna could not hear these words, but she could see the expression which accompanied their utterance, and could indicate by a sign her anxiety to know what had happened. Mrs. Blyth ran her eye quickly over the letter, and ascertaining that there was nothing in it which Madonna might not be allowed to read, beckoned to the girl to look over her shoulder, as the easiest and shortest way of explaining what was the matter.

"How distressed Valentine will be to hear of this!" thought Mrs. Blyth, summoning Patty up-stairs by a pull at her bell-rope, while Madonna was eagerly reading the letter. The housemaid appeared immediately, and was charged by her mistress to go to Kirk street at once; and after inquiring of the landlady about Zack's health, to get a written list of any comforts he might want, and bring it back as soon as possible. "And mind you leave a message," pursued Mrs. Blyth, in conclusion, "to say that he need not trouble himself about money matters, for your master will come back from the country, either to-morrow or next day."

Here, her attention was suddenly arrested by Madonna, who was eagerly and even impatiently signing on her fingers: "What are you saying to Patty? Oh! do let me know what you are saying to Patty?"

Mrs. Blyth repeated, & means of the

deaf-and-dumb alphabet, the instructions which she had just given to the servant; and added—observing the paleness and agitation of Madonna's face—"Let us not frighten ourselves unnecessarily, my dear, about Zack; he may turn out to be much better than we think him from reading his letter."

"May I go with Patty?" rejoined Madonna, her eyes sparkling with anxiety, her fingers trembling as they rapidly formed these words. "Let me take my walk with Patty, just as if nothing had happened. Let me go! pray, let me go!"

"She can't be of any use, poor child," thought Mrs. Blyth; but if I keep her here, she will only be fretting herself into one of her violent headaches. Besides, she may as well have her walk now, for I shan't be able to spare Patty later in the day." Influenced by these considerations, Mrs. Blyth, by a nod, intimated to her adopted child that she might accompany the housemaid to Kirk street. Madonna, the moment this permission was granted, led the way out of the room; but stopped as soon as she and Patty were alone on the staircase, and, making a sign that she would be back directly, ran up to her own bed-chamber.

When she entered the room, she unlocked a little dressing-case that Valentine had given to her; and, emptying out of one of the trays four sovereigns and some silver, all her savings from her own pocket-money, wrapped them up hastily in a piece of paper, and ran down-stairs to Patty. Zack was ill, and lonely, and miserable; longing for a friend to sit by his bedside and comfort him—and she could not be that friend! But Zack was also poor; she had read it in his letter; there were many little things he wanted to pay for; he needed money—and in that need she might secretly be a friend to him, for she had money of her own to give away. "My four golden sovereigns shall be the first he has," thought Madonna, nervously taking the housemaid's offered arm at the house-door. "I will put them in some place where he is sure to find them, and never to know who they come from. And Zack shall be rich again—rich with all the money, I have got to give him." Four sovereigns represented quite a little fortune in Madonna's eyes. It had taken her a long, long time to save them out of her small allowance of pocket-money.

When they knocked at the private door of the tobacco-shop, it was opened by the landlady, who, after hearing what their errand was from Patty, and answering some preliminary inquiries after Zack, politely invited them to walk into her back parlor. But Madonna seemed—quite incomprehensibly to the servant—to be bent on remaining in the passage till she had finished writing some lines which she just then



began to trace on her slate. When they were completed, she showed them to Patty, who read with considerable astonishment these words: "Ask where his sitting-room is, and if I can go into it. I want to leave something for him there with my own hands, if the room is empty."

After looking at her young mistress's eager face in great amazement for a moment or two, Patty asked the required questions—prefacing them with some words of explanation which drew from the tobacco-nist's wife many voluble expressions of sympathy and admiration for Madonna. At last, these came to an end; and the desired answers to the questions on the slate were given readily enough, and duly though rather slowly written down by Patty for her young lady's benefit. The sitting-room belonging to Mr. Thorpe and the other gentleman was the front room on the first floor. Nobody was in it now. Would the lady like to be shown—

Here Madonna arrested the servant's further progress with the slate-pencil—nodded, to indicate that she understood what had been written—and then, with her little packet of money ready in her hand, lightly ran up the first flight of stairs; ascending them so quickly, that she was on the landing before Patty and the landlady had settled which of the two ought to have officially preceded her.

The front room was indeed empty when she entered it, but one of the folding-doors leading into the back room had been left ajar; and when she looked toward the opening thus made, she also looked, from the particular point of view she then occupied, toward the head of the bed on which Zack lay, and saw his face turned toward her, hushed in deep, still, breathless sleep.

She started violently—trembled a little—then stood motionless, looking toward him through the door, the tears standing thick in her eyes, the color gone from her cheeks, the yearning pulses of grief and pity beating faster and faster in her heart. Ah, how pale and wan, and piteously still, he lay there, with the ghastly white bandages round his head, and one helpless, languid hand hanging over the bedside! How changed from that glorious creature, all youth, health, strength, and exulting activity, whom it had so long been her innocent idolatry to worship in secret! How fearfully like what might be the image of him in death, was this present image of him as he lay in his hushed and awful sleep! She shuddered as the thought crossed her mind, and, drying the tears that obscured her sight, turned a little away from him, and looked round the room. Her quick feminine eyes detected at a glance all its squalid disorder, all its deplorable defects of comfort, all its repulsive unfitness as a habitation for the

suffering and the sick. Surely a little money might help Zack to a better place to recover in! Surely *her* money might be made to minister in this way to his comfort, his happiness, and even his restoration to health!

Full of this idea, she advanced a step or two, and sought for a proper place on the one table in the room, in which she might put her packet of money. While she was thus engaged, an old newspaper, with some hair lying in it, caught her eye. The hair was Zack's, and was left to be thrown away—having been cut off that very morning by the doctor, who thought that enough had not been removed from the neighborhood of the wound by the barber originally employed to clear the hair from the injured side of the patient's head. Madonna had hardly looked at the newspaper before she recognised the hair in it as Zack's by its light-brown color, and by the faint golden tinge running through it. One little curly lock, lying rather apart from the rest, especially allured her eyes: she longed to take it as a keepsake—a keepsake which Zack would never know that she possessed! For a moment she hesitated, and in that moment the longing became an irresistible temptation. After glancing over her shoulder to assure herself that no one had followed her up-stairs, she took the lock of hair, and quickly hid it away in her bosom.

Her eyes had assured her that there was no one in the room; but, if she had not been deprived of the sense of hearing, she would have known that persons were approaching it, by the sound of voices on the stairs—a man's voice being among them. Necessarily ignorant, however, of this, she advanced unconcernedly, after taking the lock of hair, from the table to the chimney-piece, which it struck her might be the safest place to leave the money on. She had just put it down there, when she felt the slight concussion caused by the opening and closing of the door behind her; and, turning round instantly, confronted Patty, the landlady, and the strange, swarthy-faced friend of Zack, who had made her a present of the scarlet tobacco-pouch.

Terror and confusion almost overpowered her, as she saw him advance to the chimney-piece and take up the packet she had just placed there. He had evidently opened the room-door in time to see her put it down, and he was now deliberately unfolding the paper, and examining the money inside. While he was thus occupied, Patty came close up to her, and, with rather a confused and agitated face, began writing on her slate, much faster and much less correctly than usual. She gathered, however, from the few crooked lines scrawled by the servant, that Patty had been very much startled by the sudden entrance of the landlady's rough lodger, who had let himself in from

the street just as she was about to follow her young mistress up to the sitting-room, and had unceremoniously stood in her way on the stairs, while he listened to what the good woman of the house had to tell him about young Mr. Thorpe's illness. Confused as the writing was on the slate, Madonna contrived to interpret it thus far, and would have gone on interpreting more, if she had not felt a heavy hand laid on her arm, and had not, on looking round, seen Zack's friend making signs to her, with her money loose in his hand.

She felt confused but not frightened now; for his eyes, as she looked into them, expressed neither suspicion nor anger. They rested on her face kindly and sadly, while he first pointed to the money in his hand and then to her. She felt that her color was rising, and that it was a hard matter to acknowledge the gold and silver as being her own property; but she did so acknowledge it. He then pointed to himself, and, when she shook her head, pointed through the folding-doors into Zack's room. Her cheeks began to burn—she grew suddenly afraid to look at him; but it was no harder trial to confess the truth than shamelessly to deny it by making a false sign. So she looked up at him again, and bravely nodded her head.

His eyes seemed to grow clearer and softer as they still rested kindly on her; but he made her take back the money immediately, and, holding her hand as he did so, detained it for a moment with a curious, awkward gentleness. Then, after first pointing again to Zack's room, he began to search in the breast-pocket of his coat, took from it at one rough grasp some letters tied together loosely, and a clumsy-looking, rolled-up strip of fur, put the letters aside on the table behind him, and, unrolling the fur, showed her that there were bank-notes in it. She understood him directly: he had money of his own for Zack's service, and wanted none from her.

After he had replaced the strip of fur in his pocket, he took up the letters from the table to be put back also. As he reached them toward him, a lock of hair, which seemed to have accidentally got between them, fell out on the floor just at her feet. She stooped to pick it up for him, and was surprised, as she did so, to see that it exactly resembled in color the lock of Zack's hair which she had taken from the old newspaper and had hidden in her bosom.

She was surprised at this, and she was more than surprised when he angrily and abruptly snatched up the lock of hair, just as she touched it. Did he think that she wanted to take it away from him? If he did, it was easy to show him that a lock of Zack's hair was just now no such rarity, that people need quarrel about the posses-

sion of it. She reached her hand to the table behind, and, taking some of the hair from the old newspaper, held it up to him with a smile, just as he was on the point of putting his own lock of hair back in his pocket.

For a moment he did not seem to comprehend what her action meant; then, the resemblance between the hair in her hand and the hair in his own appeared to strike him suddenly. The whole expression of his face changed in an instant—changed so darkly, that she recoiled from him in terror, and put back the hair into the newspaper. He pounced on it directly, and, crumpling it up in his hand, turned his grim, threatening face and fiercely-questioning eyes on the landlady. While she was answering his inquiry, Madonna saw him look toward Zack's bed—and, as he looked, another change passed over his face: the darkness faded from it, and the red scars on his cheek deepened in color. He moved back slowly to the farther corner of the room from the folding-doors; his restless eyes fixed in a vacant stare, one of his hands clutched round the old newspaper, the other motioning clumsily and impatiently to the astonished and alarmed women to leave him.

Madonna had felt Patty's hand pulling at her arm more than once during the last minute or two. She was now quite as anxious as her companion to quit the house. They went out quickly, not venturing to look at Mat again, and the landlady followed them. She and Patty had a long talk together at the street-door—evidently, judging by the expression of their faces, about the conduct of the rough lodger up-stairs. But Madonna felt no desire to be informed particularly of what they were saying to each other. Much as Matthew's strange behavior had surprised and startled her, he was not the uppermost subject in her mind just then. It was the discovery of her secret, the failure of her little plan for helping Zack with her own money, that she was now thinking of with equal confusion and dismay. She had not been in the front room at Kirk street much more than five minutes altogether—yet what a succession of untoward events had passed in that short space of time!

For a long while after the women had left him, Mat stood motionless in the farthest corner of the room from the folding-doors, looking vacantly toward Zack's bed-chamber. His first surprise on finding a stranger talking in the passage, when he let himself in from the street; his first vexation on hearing of Zack's accident from the landlady; his momentary impulse to discover himself to Mary's child, when he saw Madonna standing in his room; and again when he knew that she had come there with her little offering for the one kind purpose of helping the sick lad in his distress—



all these sensations were now gone from his memory as well as from his heart: absorbed in the one predominant emotion with which the discovery of the resemblance between Zack's hair and the hair from Jane Holdworth's letter now filled him. No ordinary shocks could strike Mat's mind hard enough to make it lose its balance: *this* shock prostrated it in an instant.

In proportion as he gradually recovered his self-possession, so did the desire strengthen in him to ascertain the resemblance between the two kinds of hair once more, but in such a manner as it had not been ascertained yet. He stole gently to the folding-doors and looked into young Thorpe's room. Zack was still asleep.

After pausing for a moment, and shaking his head sorrowfully as he noticed how pale and wasted the lad's face looked, he approached the pillow, and laid the lock of Arthur Carr's hair upon it, close to the uninjured side of Zack's head. It was then late in the afternoon, but not dusk yet; no blind hung over the bedroom-window, and all the light in the sky streamed full on to the pillow as his eyes fastened on it. The similarity between the sleeper's hair and the hair of Arthur Carr was perfect! Both were of the same light-brown color, and both had, running through that color, the same delicate golden tinge, brightly visible in the light, hardly to be detected at all in the shade.

Why had this extraordinary resemblance never struck him before? Perhaps because he had never examined Arthur Carr's hair with attention, until he had possessed himself of Mary's bracelet, and had gone away to the country. Perhaps also because he had never yet taken notice enough of Zack's hair to care to look close at it. And now the resemblance was traced, to what conclusion did it point? Plainly, from Zack's youth, to none in connection with *him*. But what elder relatives had he? and which of them was he most like? Did he take after his—

Mat was looking down at the sleeper just then; something in the lad's face troubled him, and kept his mind from pursuing that last thought. He took the lock of hair from the pillow, and went into the front room. There was anxiety and almost dread in his face, as he thought of the fatally-decisive question in relation to the momentous discovery he had just made, which must be addressed to Zack when he awoke. He had never really known how fond he was of his fellow-lodger until now, when he was conscious of a dull, numbing sensation of dismay at the prospect of addressing that question to the friend who had lived as a brother with him since the day when they first met.

As the evening closed in, Zack woke. It

was a relief to Mat, as he went to the bedside, to know that his face could not now be clearly seen. The burden of that terrible question pressed heavily on his heart while he held his comrade's feeble hand; while he answered as considerately, yet as briefly as he could, the many inquiries addressed to him; and while he listened patiently and silently to the sufferer's long, wandering, faintly-uttered narrative of the accident that had befallen him. Toward the close of that narrative, Zack himself unconsciously led the way to the fatal question which Mat longed yet dreaded to ask him.

"Well, old fellow," he said, turning feebly on his pillow so as to face Matthew, "as I told you, I've been so awfully down in the mouth, I haven't known what to do. Something like what you call 'the horrors' has been taking hold of me; and this morning, in particular, I was so wretched and lonely (not knowing when you would come back, or whether you would ever come back at all), that I asked the landlady to write for me to my father, begging his pardon, and all that. I haven't behaved as well as I ought: and, somehow, when a fellow's ill and lonely, he gets homesick, and—and—"

His voice began to grow faint, and he left the sentence unfinished.

"Zack," said Mat, turning his face away from the bed while he spoke; though it was now quite dark—"Zack, what sort of a man is your father?"

"What sort of a man! How do you mean?"

"To look at. Are you like him in the face?"

"Lord help you, Mat! as little like as possible. My father's face is all wrinkled and marked."

"Ay, ay, like other old men's faces. His hair's gray, I suppose?"

"Quite white. By-the-by—talking of that—there is one point I'm like him in—at least, like what he *was*, when he was a young man."

"What's that?"

"What we've been speaking of—his hair. I've heard my mother say, when she first married him—just shake up my pillow a bit, will you, Mat?"

"Yes, yes. And what did you hear your mother say?"

"Oh, nothing particular: only that when he was a young man, his hair was exactly like what mine is now."

As those words were spoken, the landlady knocked at the door, and announced that she was waiting outside with candles, and a nice cup of tea for the invalid. Mat let her into the bedchamber—then immediately walked out of it into the front room, and closed the folding-doors behind him. Brave as he was, he was afraid, at that moment, to let Zack see his face.

He walked to the fireplace, and rested his head and arm on the chimney-piece—reflected for a little while, in that position—then stood upright again—and searching in his pocket, drew from it once more that fatal lock of hair which he had examined so anxiously and so often during his past fortnight in the country.

"Your work's done," he said, looking at it for a moment, as it lay in his hand—then throwing it into the dull red fire which was now burning low in the grate. "Your work's done; and mine won't be long a-doing." He rested his head and arm again wearily on the chimney-piece, as he added:—

"I'm brothers with Zack—that's the hard part of it! I'm brothers with Zack."

## CHAPTER XVI.

### IS HE THE MAN?

ON the forenoon of the day that followed Mat's return to Kirk street, the ordinarily dull aspect of Baregrove square was enlivened by a procession of three handsome private carriages which stopped at Mr. Thorpe's door. From each carriage there descended gentlemen of highly respectable appearance, clothed in shining black garments, and wearing, for the most part, white cravats. One of these gentlemen carried in his hands a handsome silver inkstand, and another gentleman who followed him, bore a roll of glossy paper, tied round with a broad riband of sober purple hue. The roll contained an address to Mr. Thorpe, eulogizing his character in very affectionate terms—the inkstand was a testimonial to be presented after the address—and the gentlemen who occupied the three private carriages were all eminent members of the religious society which Mr. Thorpe had served in the capacity of secretary, and from which he was now obliged to secede in consequence of the precarious state of his health.

A small, orderly, and reverential assembly of idle people had collected on the pavement: to see the gentlemen alight, to watch them go into the house, to stare at the inkstand, to wonder at the address, to observe that Mr. Thorpe's page wore his best livery, and that Mr. Thorpe's housemaid had on new cap-ribands and her Sunday gown. After the street-door had been closed, and these various objects for popular admiration had disappeared, there still remained an attraction outside in the square, which eloquently addressed itself to the general ear. One of the footmen in attendance on the carriages, had collected many interesting particulars about the deputation and the

testimonial, and while he related them in regular order to another footman anxious for information, the small and orderly public of idlers stood round about, and eagerly caught up any stray words explanatory of the ceremonies then in progress inside the house, which fell in their way.

One of the most attentive of these listeners was a swarthy-complexioned man with bristling whiskers and a scarred face, who had made one of the assembly on the pavement from the moment of its first congregating. He had been almost as much stared at by the people about him as the deputation itself; and had been set down among them generally as a foreigner of the most outlandish kind—but, in plain truth, he was English to the back-bone, being no other than Matthew Grice.

Mat's look, as he stood listening among his neighbors, was now just as quietly vigilant, his manner just as gruffly self-possessed, as usual. But it had cost him a hard struggle that morning, in the solitude of one of his longest and loneliest walks, to compose himself—or, in his favorite phrase, to "get to be his own man again."

To better-instructed minds, the startling resemblance between Zack's hair and "Arthur Carr's," and even the last remarkable words which the lad himself had let drop after waking in the evening, would not have seemed such absolutely conclusive proofs as they appeared to the superstitious mind of Mat. From the moment when he threw the lock of hair into the fire, to the moment when he was now loitering at Mr. Thorpe's door, *he* had never doubted, whatever others might have done, that the man who had been the ruin of his sister, and the man who was the nearest blood-relation of the comrade who shared his roof, and lay sick at that moment in his bed, were one and the same. Though he stood now, amid the casual street spectators, apparently as indolently curious as the most careless among them—looking at what they looked at, listening to what they listened to, and leaving the square when they left it—he was resolved all the time to watch his first opportunity of entering Mr. Thorpe's house that very day; resolved to investigate through all its ramifications, the secret which he had first discovered when the fragments of Zack's hair were playfully held up for him to look at in the deaf and dumb girl's hand.

The dispersion of the idlers on the pavement was accelerated, and the footman's imaginary description of the proceedings then in progress at Mr. Thorpe's, was cut short, by the falling of a heavy shower. The frost after breaking up had been succeeded that year by prematurely mild spring weather—April seemed to have come a month before its time.



Regardless of the rain, Mat walked slowly up and down the streets round Baregrove square, peering every now and then, from afar off, through the misty shower, to see if the carriages were still drawn up at Mr. Thorpe's door. The ceremony of presenting the testimonial was evidently a protracted one; for the vehicles were long kept waiting for their owners. The rain had passed away—the sun had reappeared—fresh clouds had gathered, and it was threatening a second shower, before the deputation from the great religious society re-entered their vehicles and drove out of the square.

When they had quitted it, Mat entered it again. As he advanced and knocked at Mr. Thorpe's door, the clouds rolled up darkly over the sun, and the first warning drops of the new shower began to fall.

The servant hesitated about admitting him. He had anticipated that this sort of obstacle would be thrown in his way at the outset, and had provided against it in his own mind beforehand. "Tell your master," he said, "that his son is ill, and I've come to speak to him about it."

This message was delivered, and had the desired effect. Mat was admitted into the drawing-room immediately.

The chairs occupied by the members of the deputation had not been moved away—the handsome silver inkstand was on the table—the address, beautifully written on the fairest white paper, lay by it—Mr. Thorpe stood before the fireplace, and bending over toward the table, mechanically examined for the second time the signatures attached to the address, while his strange visitor was being ushered up-stairs.

Mat's arrival had interrupted him just at the moment when he was going to Mrs. Thorpe's room, to describe to her the presentation ceremony which she had been prevented by her cold from attending. He had stopped immediately, and the faint smile that was on his face had vanished from it, when the news of his son's illness reached him through the servant. But the hectic flush of triumph and pleasure which his interview with the deputation had called into his cheeks, still colored them as brightly as ever, when Matthew Grice entered the room.

"You have come, sir," Mr. Thorpe began, "to tell me—" He hesitated, stammered out another word or two, then stopped. Something in the expression of the dark and strange face that he saw lowering at him under the black velvet skull-cap, suspended the words on his lips. In his present nervous enfeebled state, any sudden emotions of doubt or surprise, no matter how slight and temporary in their nature, always proved too powerful for his self-control, and

betrayed themselves in his speech and manner painfully.

Mat said not a word to break the awkward silence. Was he at that moment, in very truth, standing face to face with Arthur Carr? Could this man—so frail and meagre, with the narrow chest, the drooping figure, the effeminate pink tinge on his wan wrinkled cheeks—be indeed the man who had driven Mary to that last refuge, where the brambles and weeds grew thick, and the foul mud-pools stagnated, in the forgotten corner of the churchyard?

"You have come, sir," resumed Mr. Thorpe, controlling himself by an effort which deepened the flush in his face, "to tell me news of my son, which I am not entirely unprepared for. I heard from him yesterday; and, though it did not strike me at first, I noticed on referring to his letter afterward, that it was not in his own handwriting. My nerves are not very strong, and they have been tried—pleasurably, most pleasurably tried—already this morning, by such testimonies of kindness, and affection, and sympathy, as it does not fall to the lot of many men to earn. May I beg you, if your news should be of an alarming nature (which God forbid!) to communicate it as—"

"My news is this," Mat broke in: "Your son's been hurt in the head, but he's got over the worst of it now. He lives with me; I like him; and I mean to take care of him till he gets on his legs again. That's my news about your son. But that's not all I've got to say. I bring you news of somebody else."

"Will you take a seat, and be good enough to explain yourself?"

They sat down at opposite sides of the table, with the testimonial and the address lying between them. The shower outside was beginning to fall at its heaviest. The splashing noise of the rain and the sound of running footsteps, as the few foot-passengers in the square made for shelter at the top of their speed, penetrated into the room during the pause of silence which ensued after they had taken their seats. Mr. Thorpe spoke first.

"May I inquire your name?" he said, in his lowest and calmest tones.

Mat did not seem to hear the question. He took up the address from the table, looked at the list of signatures, and turned to Mr. Thorpe.

"I've been hearing about this," he said. "Are all them names there, the names of friends of yours?"

Mr. Thorpe looked a little astonished; but he answered after a moment of hesitation:—

"Certainly; the most valued friends I have in the world."

"Friends," pursued Mat, reading to

himself the introductory sentence in the address, "*who have put the most affectionate trust in you.*"

Mr. Thorpe began to look rather offended as well as rather astonished. "Will you excuse me," he said coldly, "if I beg you to proceed to the business that has brought you here."

Mat placed the address on the table again, immediately in front of him: and took a pencil from a tray with writing materials in it, which stood near at hand. "*Friends who have put the most affectionate trust in you,*" he repeated. "The name of one of them friends isn't here. It ought to be; and I mean to put it down."

As the point of his pencil touched the paper of the address, Mr. Thorpe started from his chair. "What am I to understand, sir, by this conduct?" he began haughtily, stretching out his hand to possess himself of the address. Mat looked up with the serpent-glitter in his eyes, and the angry red tinge glowing in the scars on his cheek. "Sit down," he said, "I'm not quick at writing. Sit down, and wait till I'm done."

Mr. Thorpe's face began to look a little agitated. He took a step toward the fireplace, intending to ring the bell. "Sit down, and wait," Mat reiterated, in quick, fierce, but quietly-uttered tones of command, rising from his own chair, and pointing peremptorily to the seat just vacated by the master of the house.

A sudden doubt crossed Mr. Thorpe's mind, and made him pause before he touched the bell. Could this man be in his right senses? His actions were entirely unaccountable—his words and his way of uttering them were alike strange—his scarred, scowling face looked hardly human at that moment. Would it be well to summon help? No, worse than useless. Except the page, who was a mere boy, there were none but women-servants in the house. When he remembered this, he sat down again, and at the same moment, Mat began, clumsily and slowly, to write on the blank space beneath the last signature attached to the address.

The sky was still darkening apace, the rain was falling heavily and more heavily, as he traced the final letter, and then handed the paper to Mr. Thorpe, bearing inscribed on it the name of MARY GRICE.

He looked at that name, and his face changed instantly—he sank down in the chair—one faint cry burst from his lips—then he was silent.

Low, stifled, momentary as it was, that cry proclaimed him to be the man. He was self-denounced by it even before he cowered down, shuddering in the chair, with both his hands pressed convulsively over his face.

Mat rose to his feet, and spoke; eyeing

him pitilessly from head to foot: "Not a friend of the lot of 'em," he said, pointing down at the address; "put such affectionate trust in you, as she did. When first I see her grave in the strange churchyard, I said I'd be even with the man who laid her in it. I'm here to-day to be even with you. Carr or Thorpe, whichever you call yourself, I know how you used her from first to last! Her father was my father; her name is my name: you were her worst enemy three and twenty year ago; you are my worst enemy now. I'm her brother, Mat thew Grice!"

As he said this, he involuntarily turned away his head; for the hands of the shuddering figure beneath him suddenly dropped, and the ghastly uncovered face looked up with such a panic stare in the eyes, such a fearful quivering and distortion of all the features, that it tried even his firmness of nerve to look at it steadily. He went back to his chair, and sat down doggedly by the table, and was silent.

A low murmuring and moaning, amid which a few disconnected words made themselves faintly distinguishable, caused him to look round again. He saw that the ghastly face was once more hidden. He heard the disconnected words reiterated, always in the same stifled wailing tones. Now and then, a half finished phrase was audible from behind the withered hands, still clasped tight over the face. He heard such fragments of sentences as these:—"Have pity on my wife"—"accept the remorse of many years"—"spare me the disgrace—"

After those four last words, he listened for no more. The merciless spirit was roused in him again the moment he heard them.

"Spare you the disgrace?" he repeated, starting to his feet. "Did you spare her?—Not you!"

Once more the hands dropped; once more the ghastly face slowly and horribly confronted him. But this time he never recoiled from it. There was no mercy in him—none in his looks, none in his tones—as he went on:

"What! it would disgrace you, would it? Then disgraced you shall be! You've kep' it a secret, have you? You shall tell that secret to every soul that comes about the house! You shall own Mary's disgrace, Mary's death, and Mary's child, before every man who's put his name down on that bit of paper!—You shall, as soon as to-morrow if I like! You shall, if I have to bring the girl with me to make you: if I have to stand up, hand in hand along with I or, here on your own—"

He stopped. The cowering figure was struggling upward from the chair; one of the withered hands slowly raised, was stretching itself out toward him; the panic



stricken eyes were growing less vacant, and were staring straight into his with a fearful meaning in their look: the pale lips were muttering rapidly—at first he could not tell what; then he succeeded in catching the two words, “Mary’s child?” murmured over and over again—quickly, faintly, incessantly reiterated, till he spoke in his turn.

“Yes,” he said, piteously ever. “Yes: Mary’s child. Your child. Haven’t you seen her? Is it *that* you’re staring and trembling about? Go and look at her: she lives within gunshot of you. Ask Zack’s friend, the painter-man, to show you the deaf and dumb girl he picked up among the horse-riders. Look here—look at this bracelet! Do you remember your own hair in it? The hands that brought up Mary’s child, took that bracelet from Mary’s pocket. Look at it again! Look at it close—”

Once more he stopped; for he saw the frail figure which had been feebly rising out of the chair, while he held up the hair bracelet, suddenly and heavily sink back into it—he saw the eyelids half close, and a great stillness pass over the face—he heard one deep-drawn breath; but no cry now, no meaning, no murmuring—no sound whatever, except the steady splash of the fast-falling rain on the pavement outside.

Dead?

A thought of Zack welled up into his heart and troubled it.

He hesitated for a moment, then bent over the chair, and put his hand on the bosom of the deathly figure that reclined in it. A faint fluttering was still to be felt; and the pulse, when he tried that next, was beating feebly. It was not death he looked on now, but the swoon that is near neighbor to it.

For a minute or two, he stood with his eyes fixed on the white, calm face beneath him, thinking. “If me and Zack,” he muttered, as he moved away, “hadn’t been brothers together—” He left the sentence unfinished, took his hat quickly, and quitted the room.

In the passage down-stairs, he met one of the female-servants, who opened the street-door for him. “Your master wants you,” he said, with a sort of effort, as he passed by her, and left the house.

## CHAPTER XVII.

### MATTHEW GRICE’S REVENGE.

NEITHER looking to the right nor the left, neither knowing nor caring whither he went, Matthew Grice took the first turning he came to, which led him out of Baregrove square. It happened to be the street com-

municating with the long suburban road, at the remote extremity of which Mr. Blyth lived. Mat followed this road mechanically, not casting a glance at the painter’s abode when he passed it, and taking no notice of a cab, with luggage on the roof, which drew up, as he walked by, at the garden-gate. If he had only looked round at the vehicle for a moment, he must have seen Valentine sitting inside it, and counting out the money for his fare.

But he still went on—straight on, looking aside at nothing. He fronted the wind and the clearing quarter of the sky as he walked. The shower was now fast subsiding; and the first rays of returning sunlight, as they streamed through mist and cloud, fell tenderly and warmly on his face.

Though he did not show it outwardly, there was strife and trouble within him. The name of Zack was often on his lips, and he varied constantly in his rate of walking; now quickening, now slackening his pace at irregular intervals. It was evening before he turned back toward home—night, before he sat down again in the chair by young Thorpe’s bedside.

“I’m a deal better to-night, Mat,” said Zack, answering his first inquiries. “Blyth’s come back. he’s been sitting here with me a couple of hours or more. Where have you been to all day, you restless old Rough and Tough?” he continued, with something of his natural light-hearted manner returning already. “There’s a letter come for you, by-the-by. The landlady said she would put it on the table in the front room.”

Matthew found and opened the letter, which proved to contain two enclosures. One was addressed to Mr. Blyth; the other had no direction. The handwriting in the letter being strange to him, Mat looked first for the name at the end, and found that it was *Thorpe*. “Wait a bit,” he said, as Zack spoke again just then, “I want to read my letter. We’ll talk after.”

This is what he read:—

“Some hours have passed since you left my house. I have had time to collect a little strength and composure, and have received such assistance and advice as have enabled me to profit by that time. Now I know that I can write calmly, I send you this letter. Its object is not to ask how you became possessed of the guilty secret which I had kept from every one—even from my wife—but to offer you such explanation and confession as you have a right to demand from me. I do not cavil about that right—I admit that you possess it, without desiring further proof than your actions, your merciless words, and the bracelet in your possession, have afforded me.

“It is fit you should first be told that the assumed name by which I was known at Dibbledean, merely originated in a foolish

jest—in a wager that certain companions of my own age, who were accustomed to ridicule my fondness for botanical pursuits, and often to follow and disturb me when I went in search of botanical specimens, would not be able to trace and discover me in my country retreat. I went to Dibbledean, because the neighborhood was famous for specimens of rare ferns, which I desired to possess; and I took my assumed name before I went, to help in keeping me from being traced and disturbed by my companions. My father alone was in the secret, and came to see me once or twice in my retirement. I have no excuse to offer for continuing to preserve my false name, at a time when I was bound to be candid about myself and my station in life. My conduct was as unpardonably criminal in this, as it was in greater things.

"Of what happened at Dibbledean I need not speak to *you*—even if shame and remorse would permit me to write about it.

"My stay at the cottage I had taken, lasted much longer than my father would have permitted, if I had not deceived him, and if he had not been much harassed at that time by unforeseen difficulties in his business as a foreign merchant. These difficulties arrived at last at a climax, and his health broke down under them. His presence, or the presence of a properly-qualified person to represent him, was absolutely required in Germany, where one of his business-houses, conducted by an agent, was established. I was his only son; he had taken me as a partner into his London house; and had allowed me, on the plea of delicate health, to absent myself from my duties for months and months together, and to follow my favorite botanical pursuits just as I pleased. When, therefore, he wrote me word that great part of his property, and great part, consequently, of my sisters' fortunes, depended on my going to Germany (his own health not permitting him to take the journey), I had no choice but to place myself at his disposal immediately.

"I went away, being assured beforehand that my absence would not last more than three or four months at the most. I wrote to your sister constantly; for though I had treated her dishonorably and wickedly, no thought of abandoning her had ever entered my heart: my dearest hope, at that time, was the hope of seeing her again. Not one of my letters was answered. I was detained in Germany beyond the time during which I had consented to remain there; and, in the excess of my anxiety, I even ventured to write twice to your father. Those letters also remained unanswered. When I at last got back to England, I immediately sent a person on whom I could

rely to Dibbledean to make the inquiries which I dreaded to make myself. My messenger was turned from your doors, with the fearful news of your sister's flight from home and of her death.

"It was then I first suspected that my letters had been tampered with. It was then, too, when the violence of my grief and despair had a little abated, that the news of your sister's flight inspired me, for the first time, with a suspicion of the consequence which had followed the commission of my sin. It may seem strange to you that this suspicion should not have occurred to me before. It would seem so no longer, perhaps, if I detailed to you the peculiar system of home-education by which my father, strictly and conscientiously, endeavored to preserve me—as other young men are not usually preserved—from the moral contaminations of the world. But it would be useless to dwell on this now. No explanations can alter the events of the guilty and miserable past.

"Anxiously—though privately, and in fear and trembling—I caused such inquiries to be made as I hoped might decide the question whether the child existed or not. They were long persevered in, but they were useless—useless, perhaps, as I now think with bitter sorrow, because I trusted them to others, and had not the courage to make them openly myself.

"Two years after that time I married under circumstances not of an ordinary kind—what circumstances, you have, however no claim to know. *That* part of my life is my secret and my wife's, and belongs to us alone.

"I have now dwelt long enough for your information on my own guilty share in the events of the past. As to the present and the future, I have still a word or two left to say.

"You have declared that I shall expiate, by the exposure of my shameful secret before all my friends, the wrong your sister suffered at my hands. My life has been one long expiation for that wrong. My broken health, my altered character, my weary, secret sorrows unpartaken and unconsolated, have punished me for many years past more heavily than you think. Do you desire to see me visited by more poignant sufferings than these? If it be so, you may enjoy the vindictive triumph of having already inflicted them. Your threats—which I firmly believe you are the man to execute to the letter—will force me, in a few hours, from the social world I have lived in, at the very time when the affection shown to me and the honor conferred on me, by my dearest friends, have made that world most precious to my heart. They will force me from this, and from more—for they will force me from my home, at the moment



when my son has affectionately entreated me to take him back to my fireside.

"These trials, heavy as they are, I am ready to endure, if, by accepting them humbly, I may be deemed to have made some atonement for my sin. But more I have not the fortitude to meet. I can not face the exposure with which you are about to overwhelm me. The anxiety—perhaps I ought to say the weakness—of my life has been, to win and keep the respect of others. You are about, by disclosing the crime which dishonored my youth, to deprive me of my good fame. I can let it go without a struggle, as part of the punishment that I have deserved; but I have not the courage to wait and see you take it from me. My own sensations tell me that I have not long to live; my own convictions assure me that I can not fitly prepare myself for death, until I am far removed from worldly interests and worldly terrors—in a word, from the horror of an exposure which I have deserved, but which, at the end of my weary life, is more than I can endure. We have seen the last of each other in this world. To-night I shall be beyond the reach of your retaliation; for to-night I shall be journeying to the retreat in which the short remainder of my life will be hidden from you, and from all men.

"It now only remains for me to advert to the two enclosures contained in this letter.

"The first is addressed to Mr. Blyth. I leave it to reach his hands through you, because I dare not, for very shame, communicate with him directly, as from myself. If what you said about my child be the truth—and I can not dispute it—then, in my ignorance of her identity, in my estrangement from the house of her protector since she first entered it, I have unconsciously committed such an offence against Mr. Blyth as no contrition can ever adequately atone for. Now, indeed, I feel how presumptuously merciless my bitter conviction of the turpitude of my own sin has made me toward what I deemed like sins in others. Now also I know that, unless you have spoken falsely, I was guilty, the very last time Mr. Blyth entered my house, of casting the shame of my own deserted child in the teeth of the very man who had nobly and tenderly given her an asylum in his own home! The unutterable horror and anguish which only the bare suspicion of this inflicted on me, might well have been my death. I marvel even now at my own recovery from it.

"You are free, if you wish it, to look at the letter to Mr. Blyth which I now intrust to you. Besides the expression of my shame, my sorrow, and my sincere repentance, it contains some questions, to which Mr. Blyth, in his Christian kindness, will, I doubt not, readily write answers. The questions only

refer to the matter of the child's identity, and the address I have written down at the end, is that of the house of business of my lawyer and agent in London. He will forward the document to me, and will then arrange with Mr. Blyth the manner in which a fit provision from my property may be best secured to his adopted child. He has deserved her love and to him I gratefully and humbly leave her. For myself, I am not worthy even to look upon her face.

"The second enclosure is meant for my son; and is to be delivered, in the event of your having already disclosed to him the secret of his father's guilt. But, if you have not done this—if any mercy toward me has entered into your heart, and pleads with it for pardon and for silence—then destroy the letter, and tell him that he will find a communication waiting for him at the house of my agent. He wrote to ask my pardon: he has it freely. Freely, in my turn, I hope to have his forgiveness for severities exercised toward him, which were honestly meant to preserve him betimes from ever falling as his father fell, but which I now fear were persevered in too hardly and too long. I have suffered for this error, as for others, heavily—more heavily, when he abandoned his home, than I should ever wish him to know. You said he lived with you, and that you were fond of him. Be gentle with him, now that he is ill, for his mother's sake.

"My hand grows weaker and weaker: I can write no more. In penitence, in grief, and in shame, I now ask your pardon: if you ever grant it me, then I ask also your prayers."

With this the letter ended.

Matthew sat holding it open in his hand for a little while. He looked round once or twice at the letter from Mr. Thorpe to his son, which lay close by on the table—but did not destroy it—did not so much as touch it even.

Zack spoke to him before long from the inner room:—

"I'm sure you must have done reading your letter by this time, Mat. I've been thinking, old fellow, of the talk we used to have about going back to America together, and trying a little buffalo-hunting and roaming about in the wilds. If my father takes me into favor again, and can be got to say 'Yes,' I should so like to go with you, Mat! Not for too long, you know, because of my mother, and my friends over here. But a sea-voyage, and a little scouring about in what you call the lonesome places, would do me such good! I don't feel as if I should ever settle properly to anything, till I've had my fling. I'm afraid I sha'n't do, till I've had the devil taken out of me, just as one takes it out of a horse, by a thundering

good run. I wonder whether my father would let me go?"

"I know he would, Zack."

"You! How?"

"I'll tell you how another time. You shall have your run, Zack: you shall have your heart's content along with me." As he said this, he looked again at Mr. Thorpe's letter to his son, and took it up in his hand this time.

"Oh, how I wish I was strong enough to start! Come in here, Mat, and let's talk about it."

"Wait a bit, and I will." Pronouncing these words, he rose from his chair, and dropped the letter into the fire.

"What can you be about all this time in there?" asked young Thorpe.

"Do you call to mind," said Mat, going into the bedroom, and sitting down by the lad's pillow—"do you call to mind me saying that I'd be brothers with you, when first we two come together? Well, Zack, I've been trying to be as good as my word."

"Trying? How do you mean? I don't understand, old fellow."

"Never mind: you'll make it out better some day. Let's talk about getting aboard ship, and going a buffalo-hunting, now."

They discussed the projected expedition, until Zack grew sleepy. As he fell off into a pleasant doze, Mat went back into the front room; and, taking from the table Mr. Thorpe's letter to Mr. Blyth, left Kirk street immediately for the painter's house.

It had occurred to Valentine to unlock his bureau twice since his return from the country, but on neither occasion had he found it necessary to open that long, narrow drawer at the back, in which he had secreted the hair bracelet years ago. He was consequently still totally ignorant that it had been taken away from him, when Matthew Grice entered the painting-room, and quietly put it into his hand.

Consternation and amazement so thoroughly overpowered him, that he suffered his visitor to lock the door against all intruders, and then to lead him peremptorily to a chair, without uttering a single word of inquiry or expostulation. All through the narrative, on which Mat now entered, he sat totally speechless, until Mr. Thorpe's letter was placed in his hands, and he was informed that Madonna was still to be left entirely under his own care. Then, for the first time, his cheeks showed symptoms of returning to their natural color, and he exclaimed fervently, "Thank God! I sha'n't lose her, after all! I only wish you had begun by telling me of that the moment you came into the room!"

Saying this, he began to read Mr. Thorpe's letter. When he had finished it, and looked up at Mat, the tears were in his eyes. "It's so shocking," said the kind-hearted painter,

"that he should write to me in such terms of humiliation as these, and doubt if I can forgive him, when he has a right to my everlasting gratitude for not breaking my heart by asking me to part with our darling child—for I must call her ours still. They never met—he has never, never, seen her face," continued Valentine, in lower and fainter tones. "She always wore her veil down by my wish, when we went out, and our walks were generally into the country, instead of town way. I only once remember seeing him coming toward us; and then I crossed the road with her, knowing we were not on terms. There's something dreadful about the father and daughter living so near each other, yet being—if one may say so—so far, so very far apart. It's dreadful to think of that—more dreadful still to think of its having been *her* hand which held up the hair for you to look at, and *her* little innocent action which led to the shocking discovery of who her father really was!"

"Do you ever mean to let her know as much about it as we do?" asked Matthew.

The look of dismay began to appear again in Valentine's face. "Have you told Zack, yet?" he inquired, nervously and eagerly.

"No," said Mat; "and don't you! When Zack's on his legs again, he's going to take a voyage, and get a season's hunting along with me in the wild country over the water. I'm as fond of the lad, as if he was a bit of my own flesh and blood. I cottoned to him when he hit out so hearty for me at the singing-shop—we've been brothers together ever since. I've spared Zack's father for Zack's sake; and I don't ask no more reward for it, than to take the lad a-hunting for a season or two along with me. When he comes back here, and we say 'good-by,' I'll tell him all what's happened; but I won't risk bringing so much as a cross look into his eyes now, by dropping a word to him of what's passed betwixt his father and me."

Although this speech excited no little surprise and interest in Valentine's mind, it did not succeed in suspending the anxieties which had been awakened in him by Matthew's preceding question, and which he now began to feel the necessity of confiding to Mrs. Blyth—his grand counsellor in all difficulties, and unfailing comforter in all troubles. "Do you mind waiting here?" he said, "while I go up-stairs, and break this strange and fearful news to my wife. I should wish to be guided entirely by her advice in meeting the very serious difficulty in relation to the poor dear child, which you have just suggested to me. Do you mind waiting?"

Yes: Matthew would willingly wait. Hearing this, Mr. Blyth left the room directly.



He remained away a long time, and when he came back, his face did not seem to have gained in composure during his absence.

"My wife has told me of a discovery," he said, "which her intimate sympathy with our adopted daughter enabled her to make some time since. I have been both astonished and distressed at hearing of it. But I need say no more on the subject to you, than that this discovery has at once decided us to confide nothing to Madonna—to Mary, I ought to say—until Zack has got well again and has left England. When I heard just now, from you, of his projected voyage, I must confess I saw many decided objections to it. They have all been removed by what my wife has told me. I heartily agree with her that the best thing Zack can do is to make the trip he proposes. You are willing to take care of him; and I honestly believe that we may safely trust him with you."

A great and serious difficulty being thus disposed of, Valentine found leisure to pay some attention to minor things. Among other questions which he now asked, was one relating to the hair bracelet, and to the manner in which Matthew had become possessed of it. He was answered by the frankest confession, a confession which tried even *his* kindly and forbearing disposition to the utmost, as he listened to it; and which drew from him, when it was ended, some of the strongest terms of reproach that had ever passed his lips. Mat listened till he had done; then, taking his hat to go, muttered a few words of rough apology, which Valentine's good-nature induced him to accept, almost as soon as they were spoken. "We must let bygones be bygones," said the painter. "You have been candid with me, at last, at any rate; and, in recognition of that candor, I say 'good-night, Mr. Grice,' as a friend of yours still."

When Mat returned to Kirk street, the landlady came out of her little parlor to tell him of a visiter who had been to the lodgings in his absence. An elderly lady looking very pale and ill, had asked to see young Mr. Thorpe, and had defaced the request by saying that she was his mother. Zack was then asleep, but the lady had been taken up-stairs to see him in bed—had stooped over him, and kissed him—and had then gone away again, hastily, and in tears. Matthew's face grew grave as he listened, but he said nothing when the landlady had done, except a word or two charging her not to mention to Zack what had happened when he woke. It was plain that Mrs. Thorpe had been told her husband's secret, and that she had lovingly devoted herself to him, as comforter and companion to the last.

When the doctor paid his regular visit to the invalid, the next morning, he was

called on immediately for an answer to the important question of when Zack would be fit to travel. After due consideration and careful inspection of the injured side of the patient's head, he replied that in a month's time the lad might safely go on board ship, and that the sea-voyage proposed would do more toward restoring him to perfect health and strength, than all the tonic medicines that all the doctors in England could prescribe.

Matthew might have found the month's inaction to which he was now obliged to submit for Zack's sake, rather tedious, but for the opportune arrival in Kirk street of a professional visiter from Dibledean. Though his client had ungratefully and entirely forgotten him, Mr. Tatt had not by any means forgotten his client, but had, on the contrary, attended to his interests with unremitting resolution and assiduity. He had discovered that Mat was entitled, under his father's will, to no less a sum than two thousand pounds, if his identity could be properly established. To effect this result was now, therefore, the grand object of Mr. Tatt's ambition. He had the prospect, not only of making a little money, but of establishing a famous reputation in Dibledean, if he succeeded—and, by dint of perseverance, he ultimately did succeed. He carried Mat about to all sorts of places, insisted on his signing all sorts of papers and making all sorts of declarations, and ended by accumulating such a mass of evidence before the month was out, that Mr. Nawby, as executor to "the late Joshua Grice," declared himself convinced of the claimant's identity. Mat, on being informed of this, ordered Mr. Tatt, after first deducting the amount of his bill from the forthcoming legacy, to draw him out such a legal form as might enable him to settle his property forthwith on another person. When Mr. Tatt asked to be furnished with the name of this person, he was told to write "Martha Peckover."

"Mary's child has got you to look after her, and money enough from her father to keep her," said Mat, as he put the signed instrument into Valentine's hands. "When Martha Peckover's old and past her work, she may want a bank-note or two to fall back on. Give her this, when I'm gone—and say she earned it from Mary's brother, the day she stopped and suckled Mary's child for her by the roadside."

The day of departure drew near. Zack rallied so rapidly, that he was able, a week before it arrived, to go himself and fetch the letter from his father which was waiting for him at the agent's office. It assured him, briefly, but very kindly, of the forgiveness which he had written to ask—referred him to the man of business for particulars of the allowance granted to him, while he

pursued his studies in the art, or otherwise occupied himself—urged him always to look on Mr. Blyth as the best friend and counsellor that he could ever have—and ended by engaging him to write often about himself and his employments, to his mother; sending his letters to be forwarded through the agent. When Zack, hearing from this gentleman that his father had left the house in Baregrove square, desired to know what had occasioned the change of residence, he was only informed that the state of Mr. Thorpe's health had obliged him to seek perfect retirement and repose; and that there were reasons at present for not mentioning the place of his retreat to any one, which it was not deemed expedient for his son to become acquainted with.

The day of departure arrived. In the morning, by Valentine's advice, Zack wrote to his mother, only telling her, in reference to his proposed trip, that he was about to travel to improve and amuse himself, in the company of a friend, of whom Mr. Blyth approved. While he was thus engaged, the painter had a private interview with Matthew Grice, and very earnestly charged him to remember his responsibilities toward his young companion. Mat answered briefly and characteristically: "I told you I was as fond of him as if he was a bit of my own flesh and blood. If you don't believe I shall take care of him, after that—I can't say nothing to make you."

Both the travellers were taken up into Mrs. Blyth's room to say farewell. It was a sad parting. Zack's spirits had not been so good as usual, since the day of his visit to the agent's—and the other persons assembled were all more or less affected in an unusual degree by the approaching separation. Madonna had looked ill and anxious—though she would not own to having anything the matter with her—for some days past. But now, when she saw the parting looks exchanged around her, the poor girl's agitation got beyond her control, and became so painfully evident that Zack wisely and considerably hurried over the farewell scene. He went out first. Matthew followed him to the landing—then stopped—and suddenly retraced his steps. He entered the room again, and took his sister's child by the hand once more; bent over her as she stood pale and in tears before him; and kissed her on the cheek. "Tell her some day, that me and her mother was playmates together," he said to Mrs. Blyth, as he turned away to join Zack on the stairs.

Valentine accompanied them to the ship. When they shook hands together, he said to Matthew: "Zack has engaged to come back in a year's time. Shall we see you again with him?"

Mat took the painter aside, without directly answering him. "If ever you go to

Bangbury," he whispered, "look into the churchyard, in the dark corner among the trees. There's a bit of walnut-wood plank—put up now at the place where *she's* buried; and it would be a comfort to me to know that it was kep' clean and neat. I should take it kind of you if you'd give it a brush or two with your hand when you're near it; for I shall never see the place myself, no more!"

\* \* \* \* \*

Sadly and thoughtfully Valentine returned alone to his own house. He went up at once to his wife's room.

As he opened the door, he started, and stopped on the threshold; for he saw Madonna sitting on the couch by her adopted mother, with her face hidden on Mrs. Blyth's bosom, and her arms clasped tight round Mrs. Blyth's neck.

"Have you ventured to tell her all, Lavvie?" he asked.

Mrs. Blyth was not able to speak in answer: she looked at him with tearful eyes, and bowed her head.

Valentine lingered at the door for a moment; then softly closed it, and left them together.

## CLOSING CHAPTER.

### A YEAR AND A HALF AFTERWARD.

It is sunset after a fine day in August, and Mr. Blyth is enjoying the evening breeze in "Lavvie's drawing-room."

Besides the painter and his wife, and Madonna, two visitors are present, who occupy both the spare beds in the house. One is Mrs. Thorpe, the other Mrs. Peckover; and they have been asked to become Valentine's guests, to assist at the joyful ceremony of welcoming Zack to England on his return from the wilds of America. He has outstayed his year's leave of absence by nearly six months, and his appearance at Mr. Blyth's has become an event of daily or more properly of hourly expectation.

There is a sad and significant change in Mrs. Thorpe's dress. She wears the widow's cap and weeds. It is nearly seven months since her husband died, in the remote Welsh village to which he retired on leaving London. With him, as with many other confirmed invalids, Nature drooped to her final decay gradually and wearily; but his death was painless, and his mental powers remained unimpaired to the end. One of the last names that lingered lovingly on his lips—after he had bade his wife farewell—was the name of his absent son.

Mrs. Thorpe sits close to Mrs. Blyth, and talks to her in low, gentle tones. The kind black eyes of the painter's wife are brighter



than they have been for many a long year past, and the clear tones of her voice—always cheerful—have a joyous sound in them now. Ever since the first days of the spring season, she has been gaining so greatly in health and strength, that the “favorable turn” has taken place in her malady, which was spoken of as “possible” by the doctors long ago, at the time of her first sufferings. She has several times, for the last fortnight, been moved from her couch for a few hours to a comfortable seat near the window; and if the fine weather still continues, she is to be taken out, in a day or two, for an airing in an invalid-chair.

The prospect of this happy event, and the pleasant expectation of Zack’s return, have made Valentine more gayly talkative and more nimbly restless than ever. As he skips discursively about the room at this moment, talking of all sorts of subjects, and managing to mix art up with every one of them—dressed in the old, jaunty frock-coat with the short tails, and the famous tight trousers which rigidly follow his form, and which Trimbo the tailor can never cut out properly, except when he is drunk—he looks, if possible rather younger, plumper, rosier, and brisker, than when he was first introduced to the reader. It is wonderful, when people are really youthful at heart, to see how easily the girdle of Venus fits them, and how long they contrive to keep it on, without ever wearing it out!

Mrs. Peckover, arrayed in festively-flaring cap-ribands, sits close to the window to get all the air she can, and tries to make more of it by fanning herself with the invariable red cotton pocket-handkerchief to which she has been all her life attached. In bodily circumference she has not lost an inch of roundity; suffers, in consequence, considerably from the heat; and talks to Mr. Blyth with parenthetical panings, which do not reflect much credit on the cooling influence of the breeze, or the ventilating properties of the pocket-handkerchief fan.

Madonna sits opposite to her at the window—as cool and pretty a contrast as can be imagined, in her white muslin dress and light, rose-colored ribands. She is looking at Mrs. Peckover, and smiling every now and then at the comically-languishing faces made by that excellent woman to express to “little Mary” the extremity of her sufferings from the heat. The whole length of the window-sill is occupied by an Æolian harp—one of the many presents which Valentine’s portrait-painting expeditions have enabled him to offer to his wife. Madonna’s hand is resting lightly on the box of the harp; for, by touching it in this way, she becomes sensible to the influence of its louder and higher notes when the rising breeze draws them out. This is the only pleasure she can derive from music; and it is always, during the summer and autumn

evenings, one of the amusements that she enjoys in Mrs. Blyth’s room.

Mrs. Thorpe, in the course of her conversation with Mrs. Blyth, has been reminded of a letter to one of her sisters, which she has not yet completed, and goes to her own room to finish it—Valentine running to open the door for her with the nimblest juvenile gallantry, then returning to the window and addressing Mrs. Peckover. “Hot as ever, eh? Shall I get you one of Lavvie’s fans?” says Mr. Blyth.

“No, thank’ee, sir—I ain’t quite melted yet,” answers Mrs. Peckover. “But I’ll tell you what I wish you would do for me. I wish you would read me Master Zack’s last letter. You promised, you know, sir.”

“And I would have performed my promise before, Mrs. Peckover, if Mrs. Thorpe had not been in the room. There are passages in the letter which it might revive very painful remembrances in her to hear. Now she is not here, however, I have not the least objection to read, if you are ready to listen.”

Saying this, Valentine takes a letter from his pocket. Madonna, recognising it, asks by a sign if she may look over his shoulder and read it for the second time. The request is granted immediately. Mr. Blyth makes her sit on his knee, puts his arm round her waist, and begins to read aloud as follows:—

“MY DEAR VALENTINE: Although I am writing to you to announce my return, I can not say that I take up my pen in good spirits. It is not so long since I picked up my last letters from England that told me of my father’s death. But, besides that, I have had a heavy trial to bear, in hearing the dreadful secret, which you all kept from me when it was discovered; and afterward in parting, I am afraid for ever, from Matthew Grice.

“What I felt when I knew the secret, and heard why Mat and all of you had kept it from me, I may be able to tell you; but I can not and dare not write about it. You may be interested to hear how my parting with Matthew happened; and I will relate it to you, as well as I can. You know, from my other letters, all the glorious hunting and riding we have had, and the thousands of miles of country we have been over, and the wonderful places we have seen. Well, Bahia (the place I now write from) has been the end of our travels. It was here I told Mat of my father’s death; and he directly agreed with me that it was my duty to go home, and comfort my poor, dear mother, by the first ship that sailed for England. After we had settled that, he said he had something serious to tell me, and asked me to go with him northward half a day’s march along the seacoast, saying we could talk together quietly as we went along

I saw that he had got his rifle over his shoulder, and his baggage at his back—and thought it odd: but he stopped me from asking any questions, by telling me, from beginning to end, all that you and he knew about my father, before we left England. I was at first so shocked and amazed by what I heard, and then had so much to say to him about it, that our half-day's march, by the time we had got to the end of it, seemed to me to have hardly lasted as long as an hour.

"He stopped, though, at the place he had fixed on: and held out his hand to me, and said: 'I've done my duty by you, Zack, as brother should by brother. The time's come at last for us two to say "Good-by." You're going back over the sea to your friends, and I'm going inland by myself on the tramp.' I'd heard him talk of our parting in this way before, but had never thought it would really take place; and I tried hard, as you may well imagine, to make him change his mind, and sail for England with me. But it was useless. 'No, no, Zack,' he said, 'I'm not fit for the sort of life you're going back to lead. I've given it a trial, and a hard and bitter one it's been to me. Except Mary's child, my kin are all dead, and my own country has grown strange to me. I begun life on the tramp, and on the tramp I shall end it. Good-by, Zack! I shall think of you, when I light my fire and cook my pot of victuals without you, in the lonesome places to-night. Come, let's cut it as short as we can, or we sha'n't part as men should. God bless you, lad, and all them you're going back to see!' Those were his last words. I shall never forget them as long as I live.

"After he had walked a few yards inland, he turned round and waved his hand—then went on, and never turned again. I sat down on the sand-hillock where we had said 'Good-by,' and burst out crying. What with the dreadful secret he had been telling me as we came along, and then the parting when I didn't expect it, all I had of the man about me gave way somehow in a moment. And I sat alone, crying and sobbing, on the sand-hillock, with the surf roaring miles out at sea behind me, and the great plain before, with Matthew walking over it alone on his way to the mountains beyond.

"When I had had time to get ashamed of myself for crying, and had got my eyesight clear again, he was already far away from me. I ran to the top of the highest hillock, and watched him over the plain—a desert, without a shrub to break the miles and miles of flat ground spreading away to the mountains. I watched him, as he got smaller and smaller—I watched till he got a mere black speck—till I was doubtful whether I still saw him or not—till I was certain, at last, that the great vacancy of the plain had swallowed him up from sight.

"My heart was very heavy, Valentine as I went back to the town by myself. It is sometimes heavy still; for though I think much of my mother and of my sister—whom you have been so kind a father to, and whose affection it is such a new happiness to me to have the prospect of soon returning—I think occasionally of dear old Mat, too, and have my melancholy moments when I remember that he and I are not going back to England together.

"I hope you will think me improved by my long trip—I mean in behavior as well as health. I have seen much, and learned much, and thought much; and I hope I have really profited and altered for the better during my absence. It is such a pleasure to think I am really going home—"

Here Mr. Blyth stops abruptly and closes the letter, for Mrs. Thorpe re-enters the room. "The rest is only about when he expects to be back," whispers Valentine to Mrs. Peckover. "By my calculations," he continues, raising his voice, and turning toward Mrs. Thorpe—"by my calculations (which, not having a mathematical head, I don't boast of, mind, as being infallibly correct), Zack, assuming that he sails at the time he says he will, is likely—extremely likely, I should say—to be here in about—"

"Hush! hush! hush!" cries Mrs. Peckover, jumping up with incredible agility at the window, and clapping her hands in a violent state of excitement. "Hush! hush! hush!—don't talk about when he will be here—*here he is!* He's come in a cab—he's got out into the garden—he sees me! Welcome back, Master Zack!—welcome back!—hooray! hooray!" Here Mrs. Peckover forgets her "company-manners," and waves the red cotton handkerchief out of the window in an irrepressible ecstasy of triumph.

Zack's hearty laugh is heard outside—then his quick step on the stairs—then the door opens, and he comes in with his beaming, sunburnt face, healthier and heartier than ever. His first embrace is for his mother, his second for Madonna; and, after he has greeted every one else cordially, he goes back to those two, and Mr. Blyth is glad to see that he sits down between them, and takes their hands gently and affectionately in his.

"That's right, Zack!" says Valentine, looking at him with glistening eyes; "that's the way to begin life again—in good and hearty earnest! We've had many pleasant hours, Lavvie, in the course of our lives," continues Mr. Blyth, taking his favorite place by the side of his wife's couch, "but I do really think this is the happiest hour of all. Welcome, once more, my dear boy! a thousand times welcome back to friends and home!"



# SYBIL LENNARD.

A

## RECORD OF WOMAN'S LIFE.

BY MRS. GREY.

AUTHOR OF "THE DUKE AND THE COUSIN," "THE GAMBLER'S  
WIFE," "THE YOUNG PRIMA DONNA," ETC.

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"In a moment, we would plunge our years  
In fatal penitence, and in the blight  
Of our own soul, turn our blood to tears.  
And color things to come with hues of night."  
BYRON.

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# SYBIL LENNARD.

## CHAPTER I.

And the home of my childhood is distant far,  
And I walk in a land where strangers are;  
And the looks that I meet, and the sounds that I hear,  
Are not light to my spirit, nor song to my ear.

HERVEY.

VIVIDLY stamped upon my memory are the impressions created by my first arrival at Oakleigh Court. I was a poor, forlorn orphan; a Swiss by birth. Educated for the profession of a governess, at the age of seventeen, I was admitted as under teacher in a school of some celebrity in those days—as such, I drudged for seven years.

Many trials marked that period. Confinement and dependence galled my free mountain spirit; I sighed—nay, groaned for my “Father Land,” my beautiful Switzerland! bitter, bitter were the tears that moistened my bread of servitude.

A school is a little world; and young as were the actors upon that confined stage, still they were embryo characters, all putting forth the different germs of good and evil. Sad it is to think, how much of frailty lurks even in the fairest and youngest—sin, that fatal inheritance from our mother Eve, clings to all her daughters, with a pertinacity which defies education and every other advantage.

Amongst the young ladies, there was one who showed me peculiar favor and unflinching kindness. She was a kind and sensible girl; and her society proved, indeed, a solace—in short, the only gleam of sunshine which enlivened that dismal epoch.

But the moment came that she was to leave school; and when she was gone, the gloom seemed to gather and to thicken round me; all was dark to my sorrowful mind—not a hope did I possess of brighter days on earth. I had no friends—no money. I was utterly dependant on Mrs. Satterthwaite, the directress of the establishment; not a prospect afforded itself to my weeping eyes, save the gloomy walls of the eternal school-room.

About three months after Miss Howard's departure, to my inexpressible delight, she entered the study—an angel of consolation she stood before me! How I wept for joy—for was she not the only creature, who had ever attached herself to the poor, plain, sad-looking, Swiss girl?

After she had devoted some time to her clamorous companions, she drew me to one side, and said,

“Dear Felicie, would you like to undertake the office of governess, in a very, very delightful family?”

“Would I? Too gladly,” I replied; “but who would choose me as a governess?”

“Leave that to me,” answered Miss Howard, gaily; “I have a charming pian in view for you; and once having gained your consent, I will soon manage the rest.”

Imagine my delight, gentle Reader! But, perhaps, that is impossible; for few, I believe, ever experienced such a sudden reverse from despondency to hope, and then to happiness, as I did, happiness which, although all passed and gone, and I am now old and sad, can never vanish from my remembrance; it passes over my worn and enfeebled memory, like a bright flash of light, illuminating, for a moment, the mind's eye, and showing with magic effect, the scenes of that blissful period; for a moment only, however, does the illusion continue; suddenly it again disappears, and the present, with all its losses and crosses, is before my sorrowing fancy.

A few days after Miss Howard's visit, I was ordered into the awful presence of Mrs. Satterthwaite, and, in fear and trembling, awaited her commands. Her countenance surprised me. I had never seen her look upon me thus—all sternness had vanished; with much condescension, she informed me that Miss Howard had commissioned her to equip me properly, in order to accompany her uncle, Mr. Devereux, into Somersetshire, at the end of a fortnight, to enter upon the situation of governess to his only child, a daughter ten years of age. She then added, that my salary was to be a sum, which, to me, appeared an offer of wealth my most mercenary dreams had never pictured. My astonishment almost usurped the place of ecstasy; but, by degrees, the reality of my metamorphose (almost as great as that of the chrysalis, starting into the free butterfly,) burst upon my mind. I heard the young ladies decant upon my *good luck*, as they termed it, (and a bad term it is.) I heard some say, who knew the family, that Mr. and Mrs. Devereux were excellent people, and very rich, and that little Sybilla Devereux was the most charming child in the world—so pretty and engaging, and that they lived in such a beautiful place.

At length, the eventful day arrived, and equipped in the most respectable gown I had ever yet possessed, and a new bonnet—in which I really thought I did not look so very

ngly, I awaited Mr. Devereux, who was to call for me in his carriage, and accompany me to Oakleigh Court.

It was a beautiful day, early in the month of June. We travelled in an open bristka, and with the delightful speed of four horses. All was new to me—even the motion of the carriage—the fresh, balmy air through which we passed so rapidly!

The country, through which we passed, seemed to me beautiful; the hedges so green—the trees so luxuriant—the air heavy laden with the smell of the hay which was making in every direction. Then the cattle looked so picturesque, sprinkled over the various meadows; and it was not alone the rural sights that delighted me, but also the rural sounds of animated nature; the waving of the boughs in the pure, light breeze—the cawing of the rooks, and above all, the notes of the ten thousand warblers, which cheer the day with their entrancing melody. In short, all was utter enchantment; and the good genius, who had converted to me this earth into fairy land, was the kind, benevolent-looking being, who sat beside me.

Mr. Devereux, at that time, was in the prime of life. His countenance at once told the beholder the nature of his mind—there was no mistaking his character. Spurzheim would have gloried in the exemplification of his theory, whilst pointing out the strongly marked signs, by which he distinguished benevolence, veneration, and conscientiousness, added to reasoning faculties so conspicuously developed on that intellectual forehead.

The manners of Mr. Devereux were gentle, cheerful and affable; once to look upon his mild, expressive eyes, was sufficient to reassure the most timid heart. I have met with many since—have mixed with general society, but never have I seen his like—*but once*, and he—but more of that hereafter.

Mr. Devereux was the most perfect specimen of a gentleman: high breeding, mingled with such a courteous address; and he was so considerate, so respectful in his bearing towards women—in a word, he won, in turn, the deferential love of all who knew him, and, truly, on his countenance was stamped the impress of a Christian.

Long before our journey was ended, I had ceased to deplore my personal defects—for they did not seem to injure me in the opinion of my companion. He conversed with me kindly and freely; with much interest, combined with delicate tact, appearing desirous of discovering not only what were my acquirements, but also my sentiments and feelings. In a short time, I was so completely at home with my new acquaintance, that I had related all my little history—my past sorrows and present joy, and I felt assured that I had acquired a friend, for he listened with kindness and sympathy, to the lightest outpourings of my heart.

"Yours will not, I trust, be a very arduous undertaking, Mademoiselle," he said; "your future pupil is docile and affectionate, and Mrs. Devereux will esteem you, in proportion as you make her child good and happy."

I became dreadfully nervous when Mr. Devereux informed me, that we were drawing near to Oakleigh Court; and as we clattered through the village adjoining the park, I saw nothing of its picturesque beauty, so deeply was my mind absorbed in the anticipation of my arrival.

We reached the lodge, and the magnificence of the entrance only added to my alarm; all around seemed so awfully grand.

The carriage stopped for one brief moment, then the massive iron gates flew open wide; a smiling, happy face was seen—the faithful portress curtsying a welcome home to the master! My heart beat almost audibly; my eyes grew dim; every object seemed to float before them; I saw nothing more, till soon—too soon, I thought, we drew up before the stately mansion.

## CHAPTER II.

Child of the country! on the lawn  
I see thee like the bounding fawn,  
With thee I wander forth to see  
The flowers that most delight the bee;  
The bush o'er which the throstle sung  
In April, while she nursed her young—  
And other marvels, which my verse  
Can find no language to rehearse.

CUNNINGHAM.

Mrs. DEVEREUX was on the steps to receive her husband. Courteously was I greeted; but in her manner, there was something—I know not how to define it—which did not put me so much at my ease, as the demeanour of her husband; nor was her appearance as prepossessing. She was older than I had expected his wife would be, and less handsome; but first impressions are often mere deceitful fancies, seldom to be relied on. This I soon learnt, both in the present case, and many others; and although on my introduction to Mrs. Devereux, I remember the idea passing through my mind—which, if expressed in words, would have been, "I shall not like her," how differently did I feel, as time rolled on; every succeeding year strengthening my attachment towards this excellent, though certainly not attractive lady.

"Where are the children?" exclaimed Mr. Devereux.

"Children!" thought I, "I imagined there was only one child."

"They are in the hay-field," was the answer; "I allowed them to go there with nurse; I could not withstand Sybil's earnest entreaties; although, to say the truth, that little madcap becomes wilder than ever, under the influence of the 'hay-fever'—for such I denominate the excitement, which a romp in the hay-field occasions."

"I shall go to her there," said Mr. Devereux. "Mademoiselle, you shall accompany me, and be introduced to your new charge."

Gladly did I acquiesce in the proposal, though I could perceive that Mrs. Devereux would have preferred my waiting to be introduced in a more ceremonious manner to her daughter.

We passed through a beautiful garden into a shrubbery, that skirted one side of the mansion; at the extremity of which, a rustic gate opened



into an extensive meadow. A lively scene burst upon my view—the important, merry bustle of a hay harvest.

Delightfully to the senses came the hum of happy voices, and the balmy breeze wafted by the evening air; it was rather late, but still the pleasant labor was to be completed before the red glowing sun sank beneath the tops of the foliage, that crowned the summit of the neighboring hills.

“Where are the children?” again exclaimed Mr. Devereux, and then he hastened forward—for he had caught sight of one of them at the extremity of the meadow, and well knew that the other could not be far off. I followed him.

Under the shade of some trees, I saw a boy employed in hastily heaping up a very high hay-cock; he appeared to be encouraged in his labors by a little dog, which was barking and frisking round it, seemingly as interested in the undertaking, as his young master; an elderly woman stood by, looking primly on. On nearly reaching the spot, Mr. Devereux called out,

“Holloa, Albert, what have you done with Sybil?”

The youth threw his fork on one side, and rushed with affectionate eagerness to greet Mr. Devereux; and in another moment, the hay-cock assumed a palpable form, for out of it issued the figure of a little girl, who covered with hay—breathless from the confined situation from which she had escaped, and with cheeks flushed to the brightest crimson, flew towards Mr. Devereux, and in an instant was hanging round his neck, covering his face with kisses, and exclaiming,

“My dear, dear, darling papa!”

And this was my pupil, Sybilla Devereux. When the first rapture of the meeting had somewhat subsided, and Mr. Devereux had contrived to disengage himself from the little arms so tightly twined round him, he turned to me, and said,

“Mademoiselle, this is my daughter; see what a wild colt you have to tame! Sybil, go and speak to Mademoiselle.”

But Sybil did not stir; she only pouted her rosy lips, and clung closer to her father, eyeing me askance. My heart began to forebode evil; the words, “She is ugly enough to frighten little Sybil Devereux,” again rang in my ears. I believe I looked distressed, for I felt the tears rising in my eyes; and this was perceived by the boy—Albert, for I saw him walk up to the little girl, and heard him with grave earnestness, say, in a tone intended to be a whisper,

“Sybil! how badly you are behaving! the poor woman looks quite miserable.”

Sybil turned her large eyes upon me again; at first, with a glance of suspicion, but, by degrees, her face brightened, and her lips relaxed into a smile. Children are skilful physiognomists; a mere infant will like, or dislike, from the effect which the countenance of a person produces upon its fancy. The little girl looked steadfastly in my face for a moment, and then, with an altered expression, came towards me, and freely gave me her hand.

Sybilla having once passed the rubicon, once surmounted the difficulty of commencing our acquaintance, with the happy ease of childhood, seemed, in a moment, to be perfectly friendly with me. She leant familiarly upon my arm as we walked on, and chatted at a brisk pace, letting me into the history of all around; accompanied by Albert, she dragged me here, there, and everywhere.

I saw the two children look at one another when I spoke in my very broken English; for but little of that language I had been allowed to acquire at Cumberland House, and Sybil would fain have laughed out loud, had she not been checked by a glance from Albert. He certainly seemed to exercise more control over the little lady—or rather, to possess the power of controlling her, in a greater degree than any one else at that period.

Mr. Devereux, seeing how favorably matters were proceeding between Sybil and myself, judiciously left the trio together to become thoroughly acquainted.

I was soon taken to a rustic cottage—a possession which appeared to comprise every earthly joy to the children; and truly, it was a perfect baby house. Everything was in miniature. There was the cooking apparatus, in which Sybil especially delighted; how she gloried over her saucepans! The love of housewifery is surely a natural propensity in a woman's heart, for every little girl takes extreme pleasure in preparing the miniature repast intended for her doll; However, to return to Sybil and her cookery!

She described, till her little mouth watered, the dinners they helped to lay out—the potatoes they actually themselves boiled—the cakes they kneaded, and then baked on the girdle—what mattered it, if Nurse said they were as heavy as lead?—they considered them delicious.

Then the gardens—the rabbits—the bantams—all—all their own!

Long, long, did they linger over these scenes of never failing interest; and, notwithstanding my fatigue, I had no wish to shorten their moments of perfect enjoyment, for I felt I could fully enter into them. Perhaps it was perceiving this, that won their hearts, for at length, when warned by the sharp voice of the nurse, we returned towards the house, Albert as well as Sybil seized each upon an arm, and with the cordiality and freedom of old friends, talked, both at the same time, and appeared really to rejoice in me, as an acquisition—a third—in short a playfellow—an undignified position for a governess, still I felt, “Might I not unite the two—might I not be their friend—the participator in their pleasures, as well as their instructor! at least I would try!”

I found Miss Devereux almost uneducated; at ten years old, she knew nothing, beyond a little reading, and still less writing. As a baby, she had been delicate, and although all traces of that period had passed away—for I never saw a more blooming specimen of a child, still the nurse, whose opinion, I soon perceived, was law with Mrs. Devereux, had set her face completely against learning, and abjured governesses, and masters of every description.

How I ever became installed in the situation of preceptress at Oakleigh Court, often appeared to me like a miracle, and such a step could only have been achieved, by the strenuous efforts of Miss Howard, assisted and abetted by Mr. Devereaux, who earnestly desired better things for his child.

The nurse, at Oakleigh, had gained a powerful influence over the mind of her mistress; the mother had been led to think, that the life of the precious child had been preserved through her care, and skill; and great, no doubt, had been her attention to the bodily health of her infant charge; but I am inclined to imagine that harm had been done to the young mind; inasmuch as injudicious management, and luxurious indulgence, had induced an irresolution, and infirmity of purpose—a leaning upon the judgment of others, the effect of the first years of Sybil's life having passed, without her being allowed the free exercise of her reasoning powers.

### CHAPTER III.

*The golden age of youth!*

Oh happy golden age! thy limbs are strong,  
Thou boundest like the fawn amid its play,  
Thy speech is as the melody of song—  
Thy pulse like waters on their cheerful way!  
Beauty enrobes thee as a garment's fold;  
And, 'tis a spring within thy heart's recess,  
Wells up more precious than the sands of gold,  
Thy own great happiness!"—MARY HOWITT.

ALBERT. I soon discovered, was not Sybilla's brother, but an orphan ward of Mr. Devereaux, who had been an inmate of Oakleigh Court since the age of four years. He was completely a child of the family; the love of Mr. and Mrs. Devereux towards him being scarcely less tender than the affection they felt for their own little Sybil. His prospects were those of great affluence; a large fortune and fine estate awaited his majority. Hitherto he had not been at school, but his education was carefully and skilfully forwarded by the clergyman, whose rectory was close to the park, and who was preparing him successfully for Eton, where he was soon to go.

Every one seemed to adore Albert Lennard, and no wonder, for he was in truth a delightful creature—

Sybilla, like every one else, rejoiced in Albert; indeed she doted on her young companion—he was her all in all—her darling brother—as essential to her happiness, as the air she breathed. I verily believe—although it would have been treason to have said so, that it was principally on her account that Albert's education had hitherto been conducted at home. Mr. and Mrs. Devereux, had not courage to separate the children, till the very last moment, that imperious necessity required it. Albert loved Sybil, as though she were his sister, and scanned her faults with the clear-sightedness of a brother. I have often noted that brothers are peculiarly sensitive upon the subject of the faults of a sister—what in another will pass unobserved, or uncensured, in the unfortunate sister, is quizzed, scrutinized and condemned. Affection, in very

many cases, blinds the judgment, but of such a weakness fraternal love is never guilty; on the contrary, it is ever wide awake to discover specks and blemishes, hidden to other less fastidious eyes. And thus it was with Albert and Sybil. Though he loved her dearly, he could plainly perceive all her little failings, and, oftentimes was provoked by them; moreover he was sometimes dictatorial with her, exercising authority which no one else had ever attempted to assume.

In his presence, Sybil often endeavored to check a rising fit of pettishness, or any selfish habit, which such constant companionship with her nurse had engendered. A glance from his eyes could direct her, and yet she was completely at her ease with him—playful and tormenting as a kitten, though she knew how to time her gaiety. She did not venture to approach, whilst Albert was preparing his lessons for Mr. Melville, at least until she knew the business was nearly completed—and then she could not always resist intruding her little person into his own particular room of study, which adjoined the apartments I occupied.

I love to recal to my mind the childhood of Sybilla and Albert; my Readers must forgive my dwelling on it yet a little longer, to speak of those bright smiling moments of joy and peace and innocence.

What a happy creature is the child, whose fate it is to dwell in the country; how superior are its delights to those of the poor town children.

When I first beheld little Sybil Devereux, I might truly have exclaimed,

"Child of the country! free as air  
Art thou, and as the sunshine fair  
Born like the lily where the dew  
Lies odorous when the day is new;  
Fed 'mid the May flowers like the bee,  
Nurs'd to sweet music on the knee,  
Lull'd in the breast to that glad tune  
Which winds make 'mong the woods of June  
I sing of thee; 'tis sweet to sing  
Of such a fair and gladsome thing."

The childhood of Sybil and Albert was indeed,

"The golden light of morning, youth's happy hour."

But it is soon over, that sweet and pleasant time, the spring of life, with all its pure hopes—its freshness. Why are we so sad—so heart-stricken, when fondly beloved children do not outlive that bright season of existence? why have we wept and mourned so bitterly over their young graves, when rather we should exult over their early blessedness, and praise God, that the dearest—the loveliest—the best, have been removed from this evil world, before they had felt the scorching rays of summer, the sadness of Autumn, and the bleak, chill blasts of a dark, stormy winter's sky?

I had some difficulties in my first efforts, towards forwarding the education of Sybilla, and of establishing regular habits of study. I was forever accused by the nurse of doing too much. If the child looked pale, I had fatigued her to death—if red, she was over excited. Mrs. Dev-



ereux, was always too readily influenced by this woman, and sometimes I felt almost in despair; however, I steadily and calmly pursued my course, and as even the nurse's jealousy had nothing tangible to grasp at, in my conduct, and I was supported by Mr. Devereux, as well as Albert, who was a most powerful ally, I held my ground, and by degrees proceeded to work my way in cultivating the mind of my little pupil, which I found, like the block of pure marble in the quarry, excellent in itself, but requiring the skill of the polisher to bring forth its beauties to full perfection.

But I was soon to loose my champion, Albert. At the close of the summer, he was to go to Eton, and we all looked forward to the event with sorrow; and when it actually occurred, it really seemed as though some misfortune had overtaken the family—a complete break up of the happy party.

I sighed to think that the noble boy could never be again, what he had been. As yet, in his early home, he had seen naught but peace—holiness, and love; all around partaking of the blessings of wealth, combined with beneficence. The very servants of the house might have been envied, for they, even to the lowest menial, seemed objects of kindness, and parental care; their employers, appearing to hold themselves responsible, both for their present comfort, and their eternal welfare, as far as by human means either could be promoted. And now, for the first time, vice would present itself before Albert's uninitiated vision.

However, he went to Eton; and Sybilla's only consolation, was to remember and to act upon his parting injunctions, which were as numerous, as they were diversified.

"Sybil, take care of my rabbits. I shall be very angry, if anything happens to White Fan; and do not allow Charlie to forget his tricks; make him sit up, and fetch and carry, every day."

"Yes, dear Albert," replied Sybil, a sob catching the words.

"And remember, that little Jem exercises my pony every day—pray, do not let that be neglected. You must write to me very often, Sybil—that is to say, when you *can*; and, indeed," he added, solemnly, "I hope it will be soon, and that you will try your utmost to get on with your studies, so that, on my return, I may not find you such a little ignoramus as you are now—you really are growing quite old for a dunce."

Large tears were now falling down the cheeks of the little girl—tears of genuine sorrow, with not an atom of mortified vanity or anger, mingling with them.

"Don't be vexed," said Albert, drawing her affectionately towards him, and fondly kissing her; "I only speak thus bluntly, I assure you, because I do so long to be proud of my dear, little sister, as well as only fond!"

"Only fond!" exclaimed Sybil; and her bright eyes sparkled through her tears. The woman's heart was there—if she were really loved, what signified aught else to her? All the rest must be, truly, but a secondary consideration.

"I will try, dear Albert—indeed I will," she said, in a more cheerful tone.

"Yes, do;" continued the boy; "that's a darling girl; and, pray, mind what Mademoiselle says, and shake off nurse's power over you; as I said before, you are far too old to be a baby.—Now recollect, Sybil, I depute you the guardian and surveyor of all the things in my room. Heigho! I feel very sorry to leave home—to part from you all—but I suppose it is right that I should go and rough it a little. I am too happy here."

Albert's farewell words did more for Sybil than could have been effected by volumes of admonition from the rest of the world. To improve, in order to give him pleasure, was now her constant aim; with all her heart and soul she studied, and her hours of relaxation were devoted to looking after his various concerns and possessions. And then Christmas came, and brought Albert home, and there was joy—unbounded joy at Oakleigh Court.

#### CHAPTER IV.

Oh! Christmas was a happy time at Oakleigh Court, that year! Albert's return brought with it unmixed delight—for notwithstanding all my forebodings of evil, I could discover in him no traces of contamination. I could detect naught in his happy, guileless countenance, save activity, love, and intelligence. His artless face bore the impress of truth, and shone with intellect; there was also in his look, that which young as he was, commanded respect.

Sybil's joy at the return of her playfellow was ecstatic; she nearly made herself ill by the state of excitement into which she worked herself, for some time previous to the happy day, from her anxiety that all should be right for him—his pets all alive and well—his numerous possessions uninjured; and then her nervous dread, lest he should think that her progress in study had not been sufficiently great!

In vain I tried to re-assure her; she was quite uneasy in her mind, and would say, with tears in her eyes,

"But, dear Mademoiselle, it would be so dreadful, if Albert should ever have cause to become ashamed of me; he who is so anxious to be proud of his little sister."

I shall never forget the bound of joy, with which she threw herself into his arms—happy Sybil!

Mr. and Mrs. Devereux, gloried in that boy. I used, at times, to experience something like a feeling of jealousy for my little pupil. I could almost fancy that they loved Albert better than their own child. That they wished, at some future period, to make him their son—that a scheme had been arranged in their hearts, upon the fulfilment of which their happiness depended, I soon discovered; indeed, in a moment of confidence, Mrs. Devereux confessed it to me—but she exacted the strictest silence upon the subject. Mr. Devereux, she said, scarcely dared even to whisper his ardent wish to himself, so

fearful was he of influencing by thought, word, or deed, the feelings of either his daughter or ward, in their future intercourse. She, however, frankly allowed, that should their hopes be frustrated, the disappointment would be almost too great to bear.

In those early days, nothing could be predicted as to the result of this sanguine scheme of the parents; for the love of the children towards each other was completely that of a brother and sister—on Sybil's side, tender and enduring, on Albert's, mingled, with such a degree of brotherly presumption, which, as I before observed, scans with too close an eye, faults and deficiencies, and which is apt to be exacting and ungallant. But although he was sometimes too candid, speaking out home truths, which distressed and mortified poor Sybil, it never drew from her an unkind retort; and disarmed by her sweetness of temper, insensibly flattered by her entire devotion, Albert, in reality, loved the little girl with a tenderness almost equal to her own, although he knew it not himself, and had he discovered it, boy like, would fain have concealed its existence. The two young creatures were inseparable—but how could it be otherwise, for they had no other companions?

Mrs. Devereux had an invincible objection to the idea of the children mixing with others of their own age.

"Albert," she would say, "has been shielded from this snare as long as it was possible; and Sybil need never be exposed to it—need never associate with those who have not been educated upon the same system as herself."

## CHAPTER V.

"Beauty and youth and grace and majesty,  
Had every charm of form and feature given."  
SOUTHEY.

"MR. MELVILLE has been here this morning," said Mr. Devereux to his wife, "to consult me upon the subject of taking a pupil, now Albert has left him, and I really do not know how we can possibly interfere in his so doing."

"A pupil!" was the exclamation of Mrs. Devereux; "I thought, my dear, it was perfectly understood by Mr. Melville, when you presented him with the living of Oakleigh, that Albert was to be his only pupil."

"Certainly, whilst Albert remained with him," replied Mr. Devereux, "but now that he is gone to Eton the case is widely different. Poor Melville has but a small income, and you well know, what a drain he has upon his purse, from his infirm parents, and his brothers and sisters."

"And who is the pupil he proposes to take?" enquired the lady.

"A nephew of Lord Castlerosse, and his probable heir; and to tell you the truth, my dear Maria, I see much of advantage in the plan, as far as we are concerned; for as the youth is to remain entirely with Melville, he may prove an acceptable companion to Albert, during his vacations, and he is now of an age to require more society, than merely 'his gentle little sister,' as he calls our Sybil.

"But surely, my dear Mr. Devereux, you cannot wish to introduce a strange youth into the society of your daughter!"

"And why not?" the husband answered, "it is not the least probable, or possible, that the same intimacy will ever subsist between Sybil and a stranger, or that tender affection, which companionship from her birth, has engendered in the hearts of both Albert and our child. But to tell you the truth, my dear Maria, I begin to think, that it would be advantageous to Sybil if she were allowed to mix more with her fellows—I only hope we are pursuing a judicious system in our plan of education, but I sometimes almost doubt it—Sybil has indeed an unknown world before her, for I believe no girl of fourteen was ever brought up, so completely aloof from others of her own age, as our bright-eyed darling."

"When did contact with the world ever improve a character, even when apparently formed?" exclaimed Mrs. Devereux; "pray let us endeavor to preserve our child from intimacy with all those, of whom we are not sure; at least, as long as it is possible."

"Well! however about the boy—this young Fitz Hugh—what is to be done?" persisted Mr. Devereux; "his uncle, Castlerosse, was once my dearest friend; besides, we cannot, from mere whim on our part, prevent poor Melville from adding so important a sum to his slender income; indeed, I know not how we could possibly presume to dictate to him upon such a subject, now that his engagement with Albert is at an end; and you, my dear wife, are the last person in the world to demand, from the good man, such a sacrifice."

"It is a vexatious business," said Mrs. Devereux; but she could make no further opposition to the plan, although it was truly one of unqualified dissatisfaction to her.

The subject however then dropped, and was only renewed, when, one morning, the following letter was put into the hands of Mr. Devereux. It ran thus—

"MY DEAR DEVEREUX,

"Men who have been boys together at school and college never completely forget each other, however many years and circumstances may have glided between the time of their companionship. You, I feel convinced, remember me, as vividly as I do you. I see you before me, as when we parted at Oxford twenty years ago; your handsome form and the expression of your benevolent countenance, have often served as a bright picture to my imagination, during the years of solitude in which I have passed the latter period of my life. And you, my dear fellow, in your mind's eye, you can, I am sure, recal the image of your wild Irish chum, with his tall, gaunt form—his rebellious locks, defying all the power of art to control. You no doubt also well recollect his versatile genius—his eccentricity—his faults and foibles."

"Well! after a brief and stormy career, I fully felt the wisdom of the saying, 'he only truly lives, who lives in peace.' I had had enough of the world—I retired to this place, which is an old castle, situated in one of the



wildest and most remote parts of Ireland, and here I have dreamt through my days, with books for my only companions—save indeed one other—it is on his behalf, I now address you

"You may have heard me speak of an only sister. She married a cousin of the same name, became a widow in the course of a year, and died shortly after the birth of a son, whom she bequeathed to my charge. This boy has lived with me ever since, or rather this place has been his home, for I am ashamed to say I have hitherto troubled myself very little about him. I ordered my agent to provide a tutor for the boy, some two or three years ago, but I now find, that he has been sadly neglected, although I have reason to believe, he has natural abilities of a most extraordinary description; indeed it was the accidental discovery of this fact, which has led me to seek better things for him. He may, if his mind and talents be judiciously cultivated, and biassed, become a shining light. Hardress Fitz Hugh shall be my heir, if he does not disappoint my expectations, but only on that condition.

"Having heard by chance from a correspondent that our former college tutor and friend, Melville, was settled in a living close to your park gates, and had educated your ward for Eton, it has struck me, that he will be an efficient person to undertake the same office for the young savage, who is to be the bearer of this epistle.

"You will recognize in the boy a second edition of your former associate, Hardress Fitz Hugh; he is as like what I was, as it is possible to be, at least, as far as regards personal appearance—so much the worse for him, for a more ill-favored specimen of the Peerage can seldom be exhibited, than your humble servant. However, I pray you, for old acquaintance sake, be kind to him, my dear Devereux, and perhaps, with the assistance of Melville, he may, in time, prove a better, and more useful member of society, than,

"Yours always,

"CASTLEROSSE."

"Who brought this letter?" said Mr. Devereux, to the servant, who answered the bell.

"A young lad, sir, who gave it to me, and then ran away."

"I expected Mr. Melville's new pupil," replied Mr. Devereux.

The man looked rather mystified, and then said—

"I should hardly think it was the young gentleman, sir."

But so it proved to have been, and the next day, notwithstanding all Mrs. Devereux's objections and scruples, Mr. Melville received an invitation to bring his pupil, to dine at Oakleigh the following evening.

Sybil and I, as usual at that hour, were seated in the drawing room, when Mrs. Devereux entered it, on quitting the dinner-table. This good lady's demeanor was ever wont to be, what in English is called "prim," although with me she had long since unbent, as far as her nature would allow. This evening when

she appeared, and Sybil sprang up to give her the accustomed kiss, I was struck by a peculiar expression on her generally imperturbable countenance. It was not exactly displeasure; it seemed rather as if she were endeavoring, unsuccessfully, to maintain her wonted dignified composure, and not appear amused at something that had evidently occurred, to excite her risible faculties—for a smile was still struggling for mastery on her lips.

"Sybil!" she said, after musing for a few moments; "you are a giddy little girl, so I must prepare you, for the very unusual appearance of the visitor, who is dining here this evening; Mr. Melville's new pupil is certainly a most extraordinary looking youth."

"Is he, indeed, mamma? How I do long to see him!" cried Sybil, in a most emphatic and energetic manner.

"My dear child, pray do not be so vehement in your expressions—how often have I told you, that a young lady cannot be too undemonstrative."

Sybil said no more, but she nevertheless looked all animation and curiosity.

"Young Fitz Hugh is certainly a strange contrast to our dear Albert," continued Mrs. Devereux; "most uncouth is he in appearance, and his behaviour at dinner was so peculiar, that it bordered on the ludicrous; therefore, Sybil, I fear for you, knowing how unfortunately keen is your sense of the ridiculous; but, dear child, you must promise to behave with the propriety which is incumbent on a young lady of your age, and position in life, when Mr. Fitz Hugh appears; and I warn you especially to be on your guard when he speaks. You have hitherto been so entirely restricted to the society of your own immediate circle, that you are uninitiated in the divers peculiarities of manner and dialect. This poor youth has passed all his life, unchecked, uncultivated, running wild in one of the remotest parts of Ireland; we must, therefore, make every excuse for him; and from the circumstance of Lord Castlerosse having been a valued friend of your dear father, I am inclined to look with favor on the young man. But here they come—now, Sybil, pray let me see that you can command yourself."

The door at this moment opened. Mr. Devereux was the first to enter, and Sybil excited to the highest pitch of expectation and curiosity by her mother's harangue, with her eyes opened to the fullest extent—her lips parted, her whole countenance exhibiting the utmost wonder and eagerness, looked beyond her father, for the next object that was to meet her view.

We have already said, that Sybil always expressed a most ardent interest in every circumstance attending other children, and especially those nearly of her own age. She had heard of Mr. Melville's new pupil, and the event formed quite a little epoch in her existence. She had talked much of it to me, wishing for his arrival, wondering if young Fitz Hugh would resemble Albert, and whether he would prove a companion and playfellow for herself. It was with no small degree of anxiety, that she looked towards

the door, which had opened to admit Mr. Devereux.

Sounds were heard without, consisting of brief snatches of a conversation which was going on between Mr. Melville and his pupil. Being a foreigner, and, consequently, possessing an accent of my own, I cannot pretend to do justice in any degree, to the description of the brogue which issued in such volumes from the lips of the youth, or give an idea of the intonation of the voice, which sounded so strangely in our ears. Some such words however, as the following, we caught, as the speakers approached:

"Ah! now be aisy—can't you, Mr. Melville, sir—let me go home, do! Sure, is it not plenty, that I should sit for a whole, long hour, before an ould woman! It is what I am not used to—I don't know what to say to leddies—let me go home, Mr. Melville, honey!"

The mild voice of Mr. Melville was then heard, seemingly expostulating with his unpollished companion.

"Och! bother the women!" was the courteous reply he received.

Mrs. Devereux turned red with horror at this dreadful speech, rendered too still worse from its being uttered in the hearing of her daughter, who was still gazing with intense earnestness towards the door, through which soon appeared, our good rector, and hanging on his arm, a lanky youth, considerably taller than himself, whom he was evidently forcing into our presence, in short, almost dragging, into the room.

Poor Sybil! what a downfall to all her airy visions of a companion—a playfellow! She beheld not a boy, but a creature that looked like a young man—and such a young man! A tall, ungainly form presented itself to her earnest glance; black bushy hair grew low down on his forehead, giving a scowling expression, to a countenance rendered still more fierce-looking, from the darkness of his marked eye-brows.

I shall never forget the sensation which this scene created. Sybil's face might have formed a study for an artist, endeavoring to embody the various emotions of the human mind. Dismay, however, was the predominant feeling depicted on her countenance, as she stood, staring fixedly upon the stranger, her color deepening, her respiration almost suspended.

I have not yet given any description of the person of the young girl; and, since she is the heroine of my story, it is necessary, as well as agreeable, to place her portrait before my readers, drawn strictly from nature; and as Sybil Devereux, at an early age, was womanly in her appearance, her features of that regular classic form, which changed but little even from childhood, what she was at fourteen, she continued to be, for many years after, with the variation only of the superiority of that maturity of beauty, which a woman possesses over a child.

She was very tall, and her form, though slender, was firm and upright; nature had truly been bountiful to this beautiful girl; her every action was inherently graceful. The cygnet skimming through the smooth water, could not rear its head more nobly than did our

heroine as she "moved on earth," and there was an elasticity in her gait, a freedom, yet a modest elegance in her every attitude—so feminine—so gentle in its character, which subdued, if I so may express it, the effects of her unusual height.

I am not, in general, an admirer of very tall women; there is something in the idea, which to my mind, does not so completely personify that feminine delicacy, which we attach to the image of a woman: however, in Sybil Devereux, the case was not applicable. Her figure was so finely proportioned, that it never conveyed the impression of the height it really possessed.

I can picture her to my mind, as she was in her young days, before age, sorrow, or any other cause, had changed the light, yet majestic step, with which she trod the path of her then joyous life, the drapery of her dress falling round her in graceful folds, animation sparkling from her eyes.

Sybil's head was peculiarly small and beautifully shaped; her dark hair was usually braided on her brow, and turned round the back of the head, in a heavy Grecian knot. Her eyes were like those of the gazelle—her features all classic in the extreme. As a very young child, their excessive regularity might have almost been said to give a formal appearance to the *tout ensemble* of her face; but as she grew tall and womanly, a sculptor might have coveted her perfect style, as a model for the Goddess of Beauty—and it was truly what Byron might have called,

"The might—the majesty of loveliness."

All this may be set down to the doting partiality of an old and fond friend, but I do not over-color the picture of the charms of my pupil—there is not a particle of exaggeration in the portrait I have drawn.

## CHAPTER VI.

But a spell  
Stronger than the green landscape fixed the eye  
The spell of woman's beauty!—L. E. L.

SYBIL was standing behind her mother's chair, when the gentlemen entered the drawing-room. She had been called from her seat by Mrs. Devereux, to assist in selecting the shades of some silks for her embroidery. The young girl's cheeks were unusually flushed: her life was of such a monotonous character, that very little excited her. She was now full of expectation, and, like most highly wrought anticipations, the present was doomed to be scattered to the winds.

Mr. Melville, in the meanwhile, had accomplished his purpose, of forcing his pupil into the room, and this having been effected, he left him, seated on the first chair which had come in his way. The good rector looked provoked and perplexed; he was not at all qualified to be bear-leader to a cub. Gentle and retiring in his own address and manner, accustomed only to deal with refined and kindred spirits, he was at



a loss how to proceed with one, who seemed to him of a totally different species to all those by whom he had been so long surrounded. He approached the table, and, with an annoyed countenance, took up a newspaper, and endeavored to read, although ever and anon he turned an anxious eye on the savage he had so rashly undertaken to endeavor to tame.

And there sat Fitz Hugh on the edge of his chair, with slouching shoulders—an unquiet shuffling of his feet, and averted eyes, which plainly indicated how little he was at his ease, or enjoyed his position in a lady's drawing-room.

I, as well as Sybil, could not refrain from watching the movements of this stranger youth. He was evidently a curiosity, and already his extraordinary accent and manner of speaking had created in my mind a kind of desire to hear more of one, who, to my uninitiated ears, appeared a complete *lusus nature*.

For some time his eyes were fixed pertinaciously upon the ground, but suddenly, with a gesture of impatience, he lifted them up, and stared straight before him. It happened that a large and splendid landscape of Claude Lorraine hung on the wall opposite. The rays of the evening sun illumined the scene it represented, with a glow of cheerful beauty, which must have been striking to every lover of the picturesque. But could that gaunt, giant of a boy, appreciate aught so lovely, as a soft, harmonious scene like the one before him—the calm, smooth lake, the air of perfect repose—the evening shadows mellowing the varied tints of the foliage, softening the effect of the whole picture, which presented nature in its gentlest mood?

The youth's eyes fell upon this painting, and it was with a movement almost amounting to a start that they encountered the beautiful work of art. A magic influence seemed to have been produced upon his mind, for he continued to gaze, and, as he did so, the expression of his countenance changed and softened. Surprise was the first emotion it exhibited, and then intense admiration; a smile lighted up the heavy aspect of his plain face, and showed, that intellect reigned within that rough exterior.

Transfixed he sat, and as the slanting, gorgeous gleams of the departing sun continued to cast, now here, now there, a radiant beam upon the several features of the picture, first coloring the mountain tops, then brightening the sparkling waters of the lake, the admirable design of the great master truly teemed with life, and Fitz Hugh as he still gazed on, with one hand shading his eyes, uttered a savage exclamation of astonishment and delight. But the sun beams vanished, and soon the landscape was darkened by the approaching shades of night, and gloom seemed to return to the feelings of Hardress Fitz Hugh; for the animation of his countenance departed, and he sat as before, sulkily and awkwardly shuffling and slouching on his seat, looking neither to the right, or the left.

A dead silence reigned within the room; all had their different feelings, but no one cared to speak them. Mr. Devereux, who had been absent from the party, now entered. Lights followed, and then again the youth looked up, and cast a furtive glance around.

Being seated nearer to him than the rest of the assembled group, I was the first to be favored by his inspection. I saw him half shut his eyes and peer at me, as though he were scanning me with some minuteness; but the scrutiny did not appear very satisfactory to his fancy, for it did not last long, and again he proceeded in his survey, and attracted by the bright light of a lamp, placed on Mrs. Devereux's work table, his gaze fell at once upon Sybil.

I can never forget the effect caused by the unexpected sight. Had an apparition risen from the earth, he could not have appeared more startled, more electrified. Was it indeed a mortal being he beheld, or a vision of his dreams; for,

“—————Sleep hath its own world,  
And a wide realm of wild reality.”

and the youth had dreamt, and the creations of his mind were brighter—softer than could have been divined from his uncouth exterior. “And did he still dream?” he thought.

Extraordinary and ludicrous was the effect which the sight of the young girl produced on Hardress Fitz Hugh! So intense was his gaze—so absurd his contortions—such struggles between shyness, awkwardness, and vehement admiration, that Sybil, who was watching with curiosity his every movement, at length could resist no longer. After vain attempts to behave with propriety, a burst of genuine laughter, which seemed to issue from the very bottom of her heart, filled the room with its merry music; and, strange to say, all caught its infection, and soon she was joined by every individual in the room, even by her grave, formal mother, who had scarcely ever been known to indulge in any more demonstrative sign of mirth than a smile. Misery, it is said, makes one acquainted with strange associates—Mirth is no less active a Master of the Ceremonies, in introducing, *sans facon*, those laughter loving souls chance may throw together. Nothing could have been more successful for the demolition of restraint, than this unexpected explosion, for although Mrs. Devereux without delay endeavored to check, with a feeling of shame and confusion, her most unwonted breach of decorum, the ice had been broken. Hardress joined heartily and joyfully in the merriment, opening his wide mouth, and showing that at least he possessed a set of the whitest teeth imaginable, which all the world might have an opportunity of perceiving every time he either spoke or laughed. Mrs. Devereux vainly endeavored to resume her usual frigidity, and when Hardress Fitz Hugh, at length drew near the tea table, and, encouraged by the still smiling faces of those around him, began to open out and speak, there was no resisting the influence of his drollery and originality. The spell which had before bound up every faculty, every gesture, had been disenchanted by the melody of a laugh; and Sybil, who had begun by being sorely disappointed, went off to bed, as delighted, amused and excited, as a child that has seen a pantomime for the first time, or a farce in the good old days of the matchless Liston.

From this day, most strange to relate, (owing to the former peculiar prejudices and habits of the family) Hardress Fitz Hugh, became domesticated at Oakleigh Court. Had he been like any other youth of his age, most certainly Mrs. Devereux would have persevered in her usual rigid manner, which assuredly would have frozen all the sources of congeniality between the inmates of her house, and the pupil of Mr. Melville. But, in the present case, the youth was so complete an original, both in appearance and manner—so plain, yet so irresistibly comic and amusing, so quaint, and extraordinary, that even Mrs. Devereux, that most prudish and particular of women, was overcome by the witchery of drollery, combined with talent and a degree of tact, which could only have emanated from a mind which, though rough and unpolished in exterior, possessed some innate refinement—a refinement which intellect alone can bestow. Yes! amidst all the vulgarity of the brogue which disfigured his speech, with plainness of form and feature, amounting to more than ugliness, Hardress Fitz Hugh was tolerated by us all, till it ended in our becoming—I suppose I must term it—fascinated!

The fact was that he was clever beyond description; moreover he possessed all the shrewdness and off-hand wit which is the inherent characteristic of the Irish people. In an incredibly short space, he had dived into the feelings and prejudices of those by whom he was now surrounded, and with no small degree of cunning and sharpness, lost no time in practising a part for all. He was ever on the watch—ever acting, and a continual by-play was always going on with him. Yes! he was a clever creature, this Hardress Fitz Hugh; and he was also . . . a genius!

## CHAPTER VII.

"A portrait is a mournful thing,  
A shadow of a joy;  
An echo of some silenced string,  
A feather from love's sunny wing,  
Snatched as it wanders by,  
Oh! echoes are as sad as sighs,  
Though gladness give them birth;  
And even beauty's shadow lies  
Like darkness on the earth."—HERVEY.

My narrative commences with the story of young and happy lives; would that I could pause at the period while youth and joy are still in its freshest bloom; but with manhood care must come, and with care, sorrow. I feel that I have imposed upon myself a task of toil and trouble; for truly I shrink from dilating upon aught but that bright, palmy time, when all was peace, harmony and love; when happy young voices awoke me each returning morning with their carol, sweet as the chaunts of the birds, that hailed the opening day with their glad songs of praise.

Sybil was peculiarly gay just now, for to her unvaried existence, the occasional addition of the society of a young person, was absolute dissipation; particularly one who never opened his mouth without affording entertainment.

However, my readers must not for a moment suppose, that Mrs. Devereux had so completely changed her nature, as not to look with an eye of caution and restraint upon the young stranger, thus forced upon them. She endeavored to the utmost to look prim and grave, whenever his sallies seemed to draw forth merry peals of laughter from Sybil. She at first restricted Mr. Devereux's invitations to Hardress to dinner, once, or at the most, twice a week. But still she could not manage to distance the youth; he was always appearing when least expected; and then his excuses for presenting himself were so varied and eccentric, his gesticulations so extraordinary—the tone of his voice, and his language so grotesque, that Mrs. Devereux, though often offended by these intrusions, was soon obliged to relax the compressed corners of her mouth, and again was irresistibly betrayed into being guilty of a genuine laugh, which vexed her more than any thing that could have happened.

Hardress Fitz Hugh became insensibly a favorite with all. I must confess that at the time I mention, I had fallen into the same infatuation, which seemed to be the prevailing fashion of the family from the highest to the lowest. Even the servants appeared bitten by the mania, and the very footmen at the dinner table, at which Sybil and I were always present on Sundays, were sometimes almost in danger of departing from the solemn deportment, suitable to the place and station they held, in the presence of their master and mistress. Such was the influence this singular youth managed to exercise over every mind! an influence which arose entirely from his extreme oddity, and originality, his ready tact, and quick perception of the characters and peculiarities of others. His eyes and ears were everywhere—he was ever wide awake. He soon perceived what he might, and what he might not say and do. He was perfectly aware that Mrs. Devereux was the person he had most reason to propitiate, and that in order to do so, he must be upon the most respectful terms with her daughter—to prim civility must his intercourse be restricted; and this part he managed to act so well, that the lady was completely mollified. Gradually she began to feel perfect confidence in him; he became a more frequent guest at the dinner table, was permitted to spend many of his leisure hours in copying some of the beautiful pictures at the Court, (for he had an extraordinary talent for drawing,) and having at length quite won the heart of Mrs. Devereux, by presenting her with an admirable sketch of Oakleigh, he was allowed to attempt a likeness of Sybil.

The sittings were to be in Mrs. Devereux's morning room, and in her presence, and the business went on with the gravest decorum. It was often a struggle with Sybil to repress the smiles, ever wont to be excited by the sight of the odd countenance of Hardress, but on this occasion he looked with such unusual gravity upon her—she could perceive such a striking alteration in him altogether—in dress, manner, and deportment, that she was disappointed of the



amusement she had secretly anticipated whenever he entered her presence.

Hardress, after much demur, had consented, at the repeated desire of Mrs. Devereux, to represent his subject in the character of a Hebe. He had long and strenuously opposed this wish, declaring that the style of her features did not suit the laughter-loving goddess, who was not a sufficiently refined emblem for our heroine's more Juno-like contour of face. And this was true, for though happiness was expressed in its brightest form, in the countenance of the lovely girl, her face was too classic for a representation, where a young, airy look—rosy health, "quaffing immortality and joy," form the chief attractions—but he succeeded well—this strange boy!

It chanced that, as he was on the point of achieving the most difficult part of his task, Mrs. Devereux was called out of the room. The expression of the countenance was to be given by some touches about the mouth. With the absence of Mrs. Devereux, restraint also departed. —Hardress began to pour forth a torrent of words.—When did he ever speak, without eliciting laughter? Sybil's face lighted up; her eyes sparkled from the amusement of the moment; the artist took advantage of the effect, and truly he was happy in his labor, for rather than a Hebe, he had created an angel with a smile—such as a celebrated painter once said, "might smile on him out of heaven," and surely a ray of celestial joy seemed to beam from every feature at once.

It is not often that we can associate the idea of the mirthful with the lovely and the sublime, but the effulgent cheerfulness depicted in the countenance of Sybil, in this instance, contradicted our fancy, for in the expression which the talented young artist had thus so happily caught, there was not so much of bright, lovely nature, as a shadow, "which the mighty spirit of Humanity casts from his wings, as he hangs brooding over her, between heaven and earth."

What a wonderful production was this picture! and how it was prized! How often have eyes gazed intensely upon it, and what divers feelings have filled the hearts of the gazers, as they contemplated the image of this joyous-looking creature, radiant in health—youth and happiness: Where is that picture now, for long—long years have rolled away since it was painted!

Picture taking induces much acquaintance-ship, and it gained for Hardress Fitz Hugh familiar ingress and egress of the court; he was consulted by the parents, smiled upon by the daughter, and began to feel himself quite at home.

My readers may perhaps think that, in my account of this young man, I have been inconsistent, for I introduced him to them, as an uncouth cub, and lo and behold in an incredibly short space of time, he shakes off his shaggy coat, to assume the smooth garb of refinement; but so it was. I have not exaggerated in my description. My next chapter shall give the history of his former life.

## CHAPTER VIII.

'So passed his youthful morning, void of care,  
Wild as the colts that thro' the commons run,  
For him no tender parents troubled were,  
He of the forest seem'd to be the son.'—THOMPSON.

"Who does not act is dead; absorb entire  
In mazy sloth, no pride, no joy he hath;  
Oh, leaden-hearted man to be in love with death!"  
IBID.

FROM his earliest infancy, Hardress Fitz Hugh had been domesticated at Castlerosse, an old fortress in one of the most uncivilized districts of Ireland. His uncle, eccentric and misanthropical in his habits, scarcely noticed the child, who was allowed to run wild about the distracted looking old house, and neglected grounds. Lord Castlerosse, spent all his time in a gloomy library; there, surrounded by books, he dreamt his life away. In his youth he had been wild and dissolute, and it was rumored that some tragic finale to a love affair, was the cause of the disgust which he had taken to the world and its pursuits.

Hardress was left entirely to the charge of the servants—a regular Irish establishment! His nurse, who continued to reside at the Castle, indulged his every whim, fostered every germ of self-will, and passion, which nature had unfortunately implanted in his young heart. With abilities of the highest class, his education was for many years wholly neglected; at the age of ten, he could neither read nor write; the only scientific pursuit in which he ever indulged, was that of drawing, and from his earliest childhood his talent, in that way, shone forth in a conspicuous manner. With whatever implements he could lay his hands upon, pencil, pen and ink, or even a burnt stick, he sketched *ad libitum*, on whatever came within his reach, and many of the dingy walls of the old mansion bore testimony of the talent of the young artist.

The steward, who was of rather a superior grade to the other inmates of the Castle, at length took courage to mention the fact to Lord Castlerosse. It was as great an undertaking, as approaching a lion in his den, for his lordship was morose, uncertain in his temper—impatient of interruption, and seldom exerted himself to attend to either the most trivial, or the most important matters of business.

Dennis timidly approached, holding in his hand a sketch which young Hardress had just completed, and which exhibited such surprising talent as even to strike with astonishment the unscientific eyes by which he was surrounded.

"If you please, my lord," said Dennis, "will you but look on this picture? I think your honor will not be sorry to find, that Master Hardress is so clever."

Lord Castlerosse, who was sitting, as was his wont, listlessly reclining in a huge arm-chair, by an enormous fire, turned his eyes with a glance of surprised interrogation upon the speaker, who continued to hold out a paper towards his lordship.

"What do you want?" he at length exclaimed, in a tone of voice not very encouraging to poor Dennis.

"I was after showing you a picture drawn by Master Hardress, my Lord."

"Pshaw!" was the only answer given.

After a moment's silence, Dennis again took courage, and spoke—

"I have made bold to speak with your honor, my lord, about Master Hardress, and hope your lordship will excuse the freedom; but to my mind it's a pity, and a shame, that he should not have some little learning; he is now ten years old, and barring this picture-taking, can do nothing—not a word can he even read."

Lord Castlerosse now seemed to be listening, and emboldened by this sign, of at least forbearance, Dennis proceeded.

"And sure there is not a *cuter* lad in all the country side—may be your lordship will think of some education for him, and you will just cast your eyes on this picture, may be!"

With these words he thrust the paper into the hands of Lord Castlerosse, who, with every appearance of the utmost indifference, glanced on the sketch.

It was a bold, vigorous drawing of a favorite old hunter of his uncle's, and the groom represented as leading the fine animal was a striking likeness of one of the stable men, an ancient, wild looking retainer of the castle.

"Who did this?" asked Lord Castlerosse.

"Master Hardress, my Lord."

"Impossible!"

But Lord Castlerosse was at length convinced by the rhetoric of old Dennis. The next day the steward was summoned into his lordship's presence, and ordered to go immediately to Dublin and consult with his solicitor, upon the subject of a tutor.

"Some person who will teach the boy, and never presume to intrude himself upon me," added Lord Castlerosse; and Dennis set off upon his expedition.

At the end of a fortnight he returned, accompanied by a young man, who was immediately installed in the office of tutor to Hardress Fitz Hugh.

The tutor upon whom old Dennis, assisted by the Dublin attorney, by chance stumbled, was a Roman Catholic, originally intended for a priest, and who had been educated for that purpose. Disinclination, however, to embrace the sacred profession, added to tastes and habits which quite unfitted him for becoming a worthy member of the sacred office, had soon obliged him to relinquish the idea of taking holy orders.

Possessed of high intellectual powers, which had been cultivated by the nurture they received at the college abroad, young Desmond's attainments, had they been directed in a worthy channel, might have brought forth fruits, tending to the honor and glory of both God and man; he might truly have become a shining light. But alas! awful responsibility of talent! his genius was the lure to lead him into danger. Courted by the dissipated, evil associates seduced him into excesses of every kind, and soon those abilities, calculated to adorn the loftiest stations, were all sacrificed at the shrine of low sensuality. And it is ever thus, that licentiousness and vice degrade human honor, and blast the opening prospect of a fair career. A reckless life of folly and idleness, Desmond then led, and his fortune of a few hundreds he speedily

squandered. Party spirit was at that time rife and soon he became leagued with those pernicious and misguided beings, calling themselves patriots, and his talents were devoted to eloquent, enthusiastic, but malignant invectives, against government and the higher powers.

What marvel was it, that Hardress Fitz Hugh, brought up in such companionship, should have early imbibed principles, destructive to religion, virtue, and morality! From his earliest years, he had been the spectator of vice and libertinism. Desmond soon discovered the extraordinary abilities of the boy, and took some pains in cultivating them, for he drank in with avidity all information he could collect; but farther than devoting a few hours in the day to instructing him, Desmond troubled not himself with the lad; he left Hardress entirely to his own devices, and freely gave himself up to every excess in which, in that secluded spot, he could find an opportunity of indulging. Nor did he even strive to veil his proceedings from the eyes of his pupil; it was rather an amusement to him to mark in the boy, embryo signs of his propensities. On the subject of politics the young Fitz Hugh soon displayed tokens of his preceptor's spirit, giving promise of being equally democratical and violent in his views. As for religion, he was educated in none. From his nurse, he had, perhaps, imbibed the strong prejudice he possessed in favor of one peculiar persuasion—a decided preference for the Roman Catholic faith.

The talent for drawing, which was innate in Hardress, chance also forwarded. Desmond, when on the Continent some years before, had formed an intimacy with a young artist of the name of Ludovico, who had since taken up his abode in Dublin. Lord Castlerosse was easily persuaded to allow him to make the castle his occasional residence, in order that he might instruct his nephew; and thus the boy became a proficient in the art.

The Italian was a kindred spirit to Desmond, and these two kept their orgies in a distant part of the mansion, whilst Lord Castlerosse's heir ran wild amongst the servants and low retainers, that flocked about the precincts of the castle.

And this was the youth now transplanted into an atmosphere, where nothing existed but refinement and the most fastidious ideas upon the subject of virtue and morality.

## CHAPTER IX.

Come to thy home, beloved!  
There's an eye that longs to meet thee;  
And oh! such a heart to greet thee!  
Will this watching never be past?  
There's a footstep. Hark! it quickens!  
Ah, then art here at last—  
Here at thy home, beloved!—ANONYMOUS.

SYBIL was, at this period, full of joyful expectation—Albert was to be at home in the course of a week.

The pleasant note of preparation sounded throughout the house. Albert's return always brought with it some extra occupation. Mr. Devereaux busied himself with, and asked of



the stable arrangements—the horses that were to be in readiness for the youth—the dogs in proper trim for the grouse shooting! The dear, good man was all animation and anxiety from the wish to gratify, to the very utmost, his adopted son. Even Mrs. Devereux looked less prim, and the joy which she could not repress, manifested itself in all her actions.

As for Sybil, her state of excitement was amusing to behold: as usual, on similar occasions, she could settle to no one pursuit; her time was spent in fidgeting in and out of Albert's room, to see that all was right and in order. Study was quite out of the question, and, strange to say, Mrs. Devereux, generally so particular and precise in exacting order, regularity, and sobriety of demeanor, never seemed to be displeased at these displays of conduct, so very adverse to the code of action she had ever laid down for the direction of her daughter's behavior; and when I even was out of patience and found fault, she would say—

"We must make allowances for her, Mademoiselle, when we remember in whose cause our little Sybil is transgressing—Dear Albert! no wonder she is overjoyed at the idea of seeing him."

"Little Sybil," the mother continued to call her, although "the little girl" was considerably taller than herself. Though only fifteen, my pupil had attained the height of a tall woman, and though still a complete child in the simplicity of her mind, in appearance she had long ceased to be one. She looked quite as old at this time as she did ten years after, and certainly it is disadvantageous to a girl to look older than she is in reality; it often induces much that is injurious in many ways.

We were walking in the park the afternoon of Albert's expected return—Sybil was too fidgety to remain quietly at home. As we reached the shrubbery that divided the Parsonage garden, from the grounds of Oakleigh, we were joined by Hardress Fitz Hugh, who, as was often his wont, leaped over the palings to overtake us.

After some conversation upon the subject uppermost in Sybil's mind—the arrival of Albert—Hardress exclaimed,

"That Albert of yours is a lucky fellow, Miss Devereux; were he not your brother, oh! would I not envy him?"

Sybil laughed heartily.

"And do you think he is indeed my brother?" she said, "don't you know that he is only my adopted brother, although I love him as dearly as if he were in reality mine own?"

"Not your brother!" exclaimed Hardress, with unfeigned astonishment—"This Albert of whom you talk so much—who you love so well—is he really not your brother?"

He spoke these words with such vehement gesticulations, and such evident and ludicrous consternation, that Sybil continued to laugh heartily.

"Ah! but you need not laugh," he continued, and the countenance of the youth became clouded with an expression which I shall never forget—which quite startled me, as my eyes fixed themselves upon his face. At once I read the

state of his mind, and at the same moment a cold chill seemed to creep over my heart, a shuddering foreboding of the future; and, as if fascinated, I silently continued to gaze on Hardress, as Sybil rattled gaily on.

"Oh, Mr. Fitz Hugh—don't you long to see Albert?"

No answer was returned.

"He is so good, so lively, and so handsome!" she continued—"You know you have promised to take his picture for me."

"And sorrow take me if ever I do it!" Hardress exclaimed, his eyes flashing fire.

Sybil, startled by the tone of voice in which these words were spoken, looked quickly at him, and struck by his fierce, angry look, exclaimed,

"What is the matter with you, Mr. Fitz Hugh?" and then, again bursting into a merry laugh, she said: "I really believe, Mademoiselle, he is angry, because he finds that Albert is not my brother—what can it signify to him?"

Hardress did not speak, but he looked so pale, and there was a compression of the lips, which told of inward perturbation. We walked on for a few moments in silence, and then Sybil again spoke.

"Mademoiselle, what o'clock is it?"

I told her the hour.

"Then he will be here immediately," she exclaimed, joyfully clapping her hands, and she had scarcely uttered the words when the noise of carriage wheels was heard.

Sybil stopped short, and stood in the attitude of listening. The blood mounted in torrents to her cheeks—her large eyes were opened to their fullest extent—her full, red lips were parted. For a moment she paused, and then the increasing sound telling of the near approach of the expected, was no longer to be resisted. Off she started, flying rather than running, across the park, in order to reach the Lodge gates, that she might assist in opening them for the beloved guest; and as she bounded along, springing lightly over every obstacle that came into her way, her white dress waving in the summer breeze, the outline of her figure, and her beautifully formed, long limbs showing gracefully, as she darted through the air—a young Atalanta she looked and moved.

Hardress gazed after the fair creature with a wild, passionate gaze—with an expression of countenance such as I had never witnessed before, in the calm, unexcitable life in which I had hitherto existed. Young as was Fitz Hugh, in his look was depicted, in characters too plain to be misunderstood, passions of the fiercest kind. At once I could see admiration and love, but hand in hand with these softer feelings, jealousy and revenge. Yes, I saw it all, and I trembled.

"Where ignorance is bliss 'tis folly to be wise."

My knowledge had not added to my happiness—far from it. A load seemed to drop upon my heart—a weight from which I could never again disencumber it—a dread which, perhaps, my inexperience increased. From that moment I began to fear Hardress Fitz Hugh, and from fear sprang up dislike and suspicion. It is odd

enough that the young man, until this moment, never knew the actual position of Albert in the family, but he heard him spoken of by Sybil as her darling brother, by Mr. and Mrs. Devereux as their dear boy, so it was quite possible for him to be thus deceived.

As we were following Sybil as rapidly as we could, Hardress said to me—

“Mademoiselle, who is this Albert?”

“I answered, perhaps injudiciously, for I felt angry and provoked with him, I scarcely knew why—

“Albert Lennard is Mr. Devereux’s ward. He is handsome, rich, and excellent—noble—generous—brave—”

My panegyric was cut short by an exclamation from my companion; he was looking towards the Lodge-gates, through which a travelling carriage had just passed.

### CHAPTER X.

“No after friendship e’er can raise  
The endearments of our early days,  
And ne’er the heart such fondness prove  
As when we first began to love.”—LOGAN.

DEAR ALBERT! this was perhaps one of the happiest days of his life, one which doubtless he never forgot.

Oh, there are days, aye even moments, stamped upon the memory—impressions, engraven on the heart’s tablets, which the wear and tear of time and the sweeping tide of circumstances can never obliterate; we have all some epoch in our existence, marked with the white stone, to which we turn with the remembrance of happiness.

I watched the two young creatures, as slowly they advanced towards the house, absorbed completely in each other.

On perceiving Sybil, Albert had quickly descended from the carriage, and she was now leaning upon his arm, her face upwards turned to his, which was bent towards her, in the attitude of deep attention, as he listened to the animated words, which seemed to flow from her lips. Even at the distance at which I viewed them, I could plainly distinguish, by every gesture, the happiness of their hearts. Fully entering into their feelings, I remained silently contemplating the scene, totally forgetful that Hardress Fitz Hugh was by my side. But I now looked towards him, and there in truth he stood as if rooted to the spot—his eyes fixed immovably on Albert and Sybil.

The calm—pure feelings of unmixed pleasure, which but a moment before had filled my heart, changed in the twinkling of an eye, for I beheld close to me the countenance of—a demon! It is dreadful, to mark the effect of the baneful passions of the soul, when evincing themselves on the face of youth—on the brow which ought to be unfurrowed, by the cares, sorrows and vices, which, too often contact with the world, in after life, brings in its train of evils. The sight is more startling, more shocking, because it is unlooked for.

Hardress Fitz Hugh was livid from an emo-

tion which bore the semblance of suppressed rage; his eyes glared, and he absolutely ground his teeth; one hand was pressed upon his forehead, the other, tightly clenched, rested upon his bosom.

I spoke to him.

“What ails you, young man?” I said.

A wild cry was his answer, and in another moment, he had darted off at full speed, leaving me full of uneasiness and perplexity.

What a relief to join the delightful party at home, to look at the calm—open—generous brow of my favorite Albert. A year and a half was a long absence at his time of life, and I found him much altered. He was at, what might be called, an awkward age, but he could not be otherwise than charming in my eyes, and although there is generally an intermediate stage between the boy and the man, which lacks the nature and gracefulness of each state, Albert had glided imperceptibly into the change.

I could plainly perceive how much the young man was struck with the improvement in Sybil. Her person had expanded into that of a beautiful woman. A complete baby still in simplicity of mind, her manners were more formed—less constrained. Even the limited society in which she had lately mixed, had done its work in giving her more confidence; she was no longer spell bound in her mother’s presence, but when seated at her work before her, would venture to hazard an occasional word—an opinion, and she was no longer silenced.

Albert had ceased to be a boy, and it was soon evident that his feelings towards “his little sister,” had altered in their character, whilst hers towards him, remained as childlike as ever.

He would blush and almost shrink from her, when she would, as ever it had been her wont from her earliest days, spring towards him and throw her arms round his neck. It was no impulse of coolness, which prompted the manner in which he now received her caresses—no, the dawn of the most intense love was commencing in his young heart. He beheld Sybil now with other eyes—she was to him, as it were, a new creature; all recollection of what she was in past days, seemed to have faded from his mind. The time had been, when he was the courted—the imperious—the exacting brother, by whom Sybil was ever subdued, in her moments of infantine naughtiness or excitement. Now the rod of power, appeared completely to have passed from one hand to another, for, at this period, Sybil possessed full and despotic sway over Albert.

It is a curious and interesting study to mark the progress of the passion of love, in a young and unsophisticated mind. Albert was open as the light of day, his countenance betraying all his inmost thoughts. I never saw a more expressive face, and his clear, and rather fair complexion, ever varying with the different feelings which were passing through his mind, served to heighten, by its bright glow, the intelligence of his sparkling eyes.

It rather pained me to note the excess of sensibility possessed by the young man—far too



much for happiness; and as, with the keen eye of a looker on, I watched every proceeding, I felt much anxiety for this dear Albert, for I feared that in his nature, there was an intensity, which would lead him to love, perchance, too fondly, and too well.

"This Hardress Fitz Hugh seems a mighty clever fellow!" said Albert to Sybil, as she pointed out to him, various specimens of the genius of the Irish youth, as they sauntered slowly towards the house, the afternoon of his arrival, after having visited the various points of interest belonging to each; amongst them was a rustic seat in Sybil's garden, which Hardress, with much taste, had executed, as a surprise to her, upon her emancipating from the confinement, attendant upon a severe cold, which had kept her a prisoner to the house for some days.

"Clever!" exclaimed Sybil, "you will say that, when you have seen all—he is clever beyond any thing you can imagine."

"And is he also very delightful—very handsome?" inquired Albert in an eager manner.

Sybil burst into a merry laugh.

"You shall judge for yourself," she replied.

"No! I would rather have your description first," said Albert impatiently. "Since my return I have heard of nothing but the feats of this youth, and already I am beginning to feel a little jealous. So, Miss Sybil, give me forthwith an account of the person of this Phoenix—I can wait no longer."

Sybil continued to laugh heartily.

"I cannot describe him," she said, "it is quite impossible. The fact is," she added more gravely, "he is such a strange creature; he is never the same, but varies so completely with the mood he is in—sometimes he is savagely frightful, at others awkward to vulgarity, and then there are moments—and they have been more frequent lately—when he can assume the air of a gentleman; and his countenance when cleared from ill-humor, is so intellectual that one forgets his ugliness. But oh, Albert, had you only seen him when he first came!" and Sybil's merry ringing laugh, again sounded melodiously in the evening air.

Then she gave a lively sketch of the events attending that arrival, and proceeded to relate how, by degrees, Hardress had become domesticated at Oakleigh.

Albert listened in silence. Though but nineteen, he had a clear, thinking brain; moreover, Eton, and a year and a half on the Continent, had given him some experience in the nature of man. There was something that grated harshly upon his feelings, in the account Sybil gave, of the easy terms in which the stranger youth had wormed himself into the good graces of the family, during his absence. He beheld in Sybil the very perfection of feminine beauty, and the thought had darted into his mind, with the same rapidity, with which the arrow of Cupid had pierced his heart, that she must be his—his own! Why not? two short years would soon pass, and then what hindrance could there be?

Yes, all this had shot through his imagination in a very brief time, and at the dinner table, it

was with increased admiration, that Albert had gazed on Sybil, who with cheeks vermillioned by animation, and her eyes dancing with joy, was seated by his side. In all his travels, he had beheld nought so lovely; and, after absence from home and friends, to return, welcomed, and cherished, the object of the tenderest affection to all, and above all, beloved by this charming girl, was intoxicating bliss to a youth, full of intense feeling, and—only nineteen!

All was life at that dinner table. Albert's presence was ever a key to unlock the stiffness of Mrs. Devereux's nature, and she rejoiced to see the admiration he felt for her child. For years she had nursed a darling fancy—every idea of future happiness was founded on this one expectation. The usual train of doubts and fears, had accompanied the ardent hope, but now they seemed all to vanish. She felt certain that Albert would love her Sybil; and that her daughter would return his love, was unquestionable.

Would that two years were happily gone! was the mental ejaculation of the good lady.

Amidst the vicissitudes of time and life, who has any right to reckon on the future? Human existence, so full of chances and changes, never remains the same for any length of period. It is a river, ever flowing—ever moving; not the smooth, unruffled lake, even and constant in its tenor, it is a stream which, for a time, may glide along, holding a regular course within its banks, till suddenly, being interrupted by rocks, it foams into a torrent, and devastates the neighboring plains.

Mrs. Devereux had formed an idol of this hope—even in its infancy, she had adored it; therefore, now what joy! Albert, had returned, improved in every respect, having gained experience, mingled amidst the beautiful, the attractive of other lands, yet he now looked with eyes of unfeigned and perfect satisfaction and admiration on the companion of his boyish days, and there indeed appeared every probability that the youth, who had been trained under their eyes, would be one day the husband of their child—her guide—her protector—oh that the time were come;

It often surprised me, that Mrs. Devereux should be anxious to marry her daughter so early, but such was the case. It was one of those unaccountable desires, over which we have often no control—one of those attractive influences which hurry us on to our fate. But why do we take such thought of the morrow? why can we not leave ourselves, and our concerns, in the hands of an All Wise Disposer, and in calm reliance await the issue of events; why do we go on striving in our own strength, placing our trust on the treacherous things of a world, which is always deceiving us? The answer must ever be,

"Our faith is weak, our hearts are cowardly, and this prevents us from giving up ourselves entirely to Him who alone ordereth the affairs of men, and doeth all things well."

## CHAPTER XI.

"Upon a tone,  
A touch of hers, his blood would ebb and flow,  
And his cheek change tempestuously,  
But she in these fond feelings had no share  
\* \* \* \* \*  
Even a brother—but no more; 'twas much—  
\* \* \* \* \*  
For brotherless she was  
\* \* \* \* \*  
Which pleased him, and yet pleased him not, and why?"  
BYRON.

I WAS curious to see the first meeting between Albert and young Fitz Hugh. In the capacity of looker on, I began to be able to read pretty accurately, what was passing in the minds of those around me, and I could at once perceive that Albert was not disposed to be very favorably inclined towards the new acquaintance about to be presented to him.

To those who have closely studied human nature, it is curious to note, how inherent to man, is distrust towards his own species, particularly where women are concerned. In a disposition like Albert's, free, generous, open as the day, it seemed a strange demonstration; for a feeling so akin to suspicion, was one of the last sentiments, likely to obscure the clear horizon of his mind. And indeed the passing cloud was soon dispersed, when Hardress arrived to dinner, in company with Mr. Melville, the valued friend of Albert.

When last I had seen the young Fitz Hugh, his countenance, owing to the influence of some inward emotion, was frightful to witness. I had quite dreaded to behold it again; but now my surprise was great.

He entered the room, calm, and collected, the expression of his features passionless and meek; his dress neat and evidently *soigné*, and in his deportment there was that air of a gentleman, which he had it in his power to command at pleasure.

But little could I at that moment conceive any adequate idea of the extent of the abilities possessed by Hardress Fitz Hugh—such a power of self command, which even at this early age, he could exercise over his manner—his countenance! Truly he was a subtle spirit, and owned the faculty of a Prometheus; for he seemed to be able to mould himself into any form, to assume any character, best suited to his plan of action for the time being.

It appeared almost past belief that the uncouth youth who had arrived only six months back, should have gained so complete an ascendancy over habits which had grown with his growth. I do not mean to assert that, in this short time, he had been able to discard the brogue, which indeed could not but stick to his tongue forever, but he had the tact to modulate his voice, to be wary of his expressions; his keen perception prompting him at once, what to say, and how to look, in order to propitiate the favor and good opinion of all around.

Hardress approached Albert with an outstretched hand, and the ready warmth of an Irish greeting; the kind nature of Albert immediately responded to the friendly advances made towards him by the youth, and soon they began to converse freely.

Sybil looked with pleased amazement upon

the pair—for even she had begun to apprehend that the two young men, for some unknown and unaccountable reason, were rather prejudiced against each other; which she regretted, for she could not help liking Hardress, and had imagined that he would form an agreeable addition to their party.

The evening passed—but Sybil was disappointed in its results. The two young men were polite in their bearing towards each other, but after the excitement of the first meeting was over, their intercourse did not increase in intimacy, as quickly as might have been anticipated.

Hardress was quite unlike himself—not once was anything he said or did, of a character calculated to elicit a smile from any one. He was a changed person; grave and quiet in his manner; and even his Irish accent seemed to be subdued to a striking degree. Any one seeing him this evening, for the first time, could merely have remarked, that Mr. Fitz Hugh was a quiet, gentlemanly youth; truly, a marked contrast to the merry, rough-looking Irish boy!

Soon I perceived, as time went on, that although it delighted him to make us laugh—that though we were quite welcome to indulge in merriment at his expense, it would be far different in regard to Albert. The slightest indication of ridicule from him, would have soon set his blood boiling over; I saw that Hardress watched, with suspicion, Albert's every look—appearing tenacious of everything he said—waiting, as it were, an opportunity to resent any provocation.

This change in Hardress, certainly, was not advantageous to him in any way; he was no longer an acquisition from his wit and drollery. When he now dined at the Court, he was ill at ease, and Mr. and Mrs. Devereux, seeing that his society gave no particular pleasure to Albert, ceased to invite him so frequently; indeed, Mrs. Devereux began to feel rather ashamed of the great intimacy she had before allowed—the free ingress she had sanctioned Hardress to make at all times to the house.

Sybil, the day after Albert's arrival, had taken him into her mother's room to show him her picture. When, with a touch from her hand, the green curtain which generally shaded it, flew up, it was with a start of admiration that the young man beheld this extraordinary specimen of genius. He gazed upon it for some moments; and whilst he did so, his countenance underwent many changes. Pleasure, delight! were the first sentiments it depicted; but when, by degrees, they faded in their intensity, I could almost imagine they were succeeded by a painful sensation.

He did not speak; till Sybil, at length, impatient at his so long withholding the meed of praise, which she knew the picture merited, exclaimed,

"Why, Albert! do you not like it?"

"Yes, Sybil," he answered gravely; "I admire it much."

"Then, why not say so—and why look so grave?" she returned.

"Why, indeed?" he replied smiling, and evidently endeavoring to shake off some feeling which had crept over him; he then added,



"If I were to tell you the cause of the gravity which you detected, I fear you would despise me, Sybil!"

"No never, dear Albert; you can never feel ought, which I could condemn."

"My dear Sybil," he eagerly continued, "you little understand human nature in general, and especially mine, if you suppose that evil feelings are not plentiful in every heart. Perhaps, I had better not tell you all I thought. The confession of my sins, will, perhaps, lower me in your estimation—and that would, indeed, be a punishment greater than I could bear."

"Oh, no!" the young girl answered: "a fault avowed, loses half its enormity; so brother mine, confess!"

"Don't call me brother, Sybil," exclaimed Albert, pettishly; "it sounds so babyish."

Sybil colored and looked offended.

"Really Albert," she said, "I think your travels *have* altered you;" she added, with some emotion, "I fully believe you do not love me as you used to do."

"No truly," answered Albert, and he approached her and took her hand; "I do not love you, as I *used to do*."

These words in themselves were, certainly, not calculated to re-assure Sybil; but there was that in their tone, and also in the expression of Albert's beautiful countenance, when they were pronounced, which must have brought with it comfort, for she did not resent them, but added sweetly—

"But you *do* love me, Albert!"

Her companion was silent; but he still held the little hand which rested so calmly in his. He looked into her face; but all was placid unconsciousness; it was as affectionate and kind as ever, but passionless, as when last she called him, "Brother!"

Albert turned away.

"Come, sir! you must explain," she playfully added, "I love not riddles.—Again I ask, why do you not love me as you used to do?"

"Some of these days, Sybil," replied Albert in a voice which was evidently agitated, "I will explain it all to you; and I am sure you will be satisfied. Till then, only believe, that my love for you can never be exceeded by mortal man."

I fancied, as I sat working at the window at some distance from the pair—a curtain almost shading me from their view, although I could see distinctly what was passing—I fancied that I saw a bright glow pass over Sybil's face; but, perhaps, it was only the reflection of that, which spread over the brow of Albert.

And presently, I heard Sybil say in a clear unembarrassed voice,

"But, Mr. Albert, to go back to the old subject—tell me, what made you appear so dissatisfied, when you looked at that beautiful picture? I mean," she said, checking herself with a laugh and a blush, "I mean that beautifully *painted* picture!"

"It is indeed beautiful, Sybil—too beautiful! Shall I tell you what I felt? Do not despise me! I experienced a feeling of envy—perhaps jealousy, that a stranger—one of whom you know so little, should have enjoyed the privilege of

painting it—should have been allowed to sit before you for hours—to gaze upon you with such intensity, as to have enabled him to trace your image as it is there portrayed! Sybil, that intimacy of Hardress Fitz Hugh, in this house displeases me more than I can express!"

Poor Sybil looked mystified and distressed.

She was innocence itself, and backward to an unusual degree, in every feeling of womanly vanity; still, young as she was, how could she, I thought, remain insensible to the charm of such love, as that which expressed itself in every look of Albert Lennard? Her days of calm insensibility to those feelings which might well have laid dormant for some time, would not last much longer I feared, and the dialogue gave me an uncomfortable and fidgety feeling. I arose hastily—came forward, and joined in the conversation.

## CHAPTER XII.

I enter thy garden of roses,  
Beloved and fair Hilda—  
Each morning where Flora reposes,  
For surely I see her in thee;  
Oh, lovely, thus low I implore thee,  
Receive this fond truth from my tongue,  
Which utters its song to adore thee,  
Yet it trembles for what it has sung.—BYRON.

I COULD not help feeling sorry for Hardress Fitz Hugh, at this period of my history. Sybil, from the day of the conversation just recorded, quite changed in her bearing towards him. No longer was she the sportive, merry child, always ready to greet him with a laugh. Albert's words had caused a revulsion of feeling in her heart, towards the Irish youth. Or rather, she felt almost ashamed of her former intimacy with him, and was now as shy, and cold, as before she was friendly and free. Hardress saw it all, and felt it with the characteristic fierceness of his nature. He attributed the change to its true cause, and all his worst passions were roused. I saw it in his eye—in the expression of his countenance, and it disquieted me.

Sybil and I one evening suddenly came upon him, in the little garden which surrounded her cottage. He was employed in making some improvement to the arbor, which sometime before, he had constructed for her. He looked confused when we appeared, and seemed uncertain whether he might not be deemed an intruder.

Sybil, in her own kind manner, for she was touched by the attention, said;

"Thank you, Mr. Fitz Hugh; this is just what I wanted"

I went in search of a book that had been left in the cottage; and the two young people remained together. They walked in silence for a few minutes. Sybil experienced a degree of awkwardness, though, from what cause, she could scarcely define. At length she stopped before a rose tree, whose magnificent white blossoms quite scented the air.

"Did you ever see so beautiful a rose?" she exclaimed; and she plucked one, which she offered to him.

Hardress received it with an inclination of his head, and, after a moment, said;

"Do you know, Miss Devereux, that I have been reading this morning to Mr. Melville's little nephew, a fairy story, which I found at the rectory; and I cannot describe to you how much the tale has touched my feelings."

"What was it?" she asked.

"Beauty and the Beast," he replied. "These white roses remind me of the story. That is just such a bunch, as I could imagine the father plucked for his favorite daughter, and which produced such disastrous consequences."

But Sybil had never heard it; a fairy tale was not allowed amongst the catalogue of our library.

"Shall I tell it to you?" Hardress exclaimed; and having received Sybil's ready consent, he, in the eager, impassioned manner, which he frequently spoke, poured the narration into her delighted ear; rendering it still more interesting, and even pathetic, by the manner in which he described every scene. She who was so unaccustomed to any thing like fiction, was indeed entranced—wrapt in delight as he proceeded; and truly the flow of Hardress Fitz Hugh's eloquence was extraordinary.

They had seated themselves in the little porch of the cottage, whilst he related the tale; and standing at the window, I must confess, that I listened with very little less of interest and pleasure, than that experienced by Sybil. When Hardress came to that part, descriptive of the sorrow and agony of the Beast when Zelmira returned not, the pathos of his description was so touching, that her tender heart was moved, and she could not refrain from shedding tears.

"Oh! Mr. Fitz Hugh," she exclaimed, "I cannot bear to hear of the misery of the poor dear kind beast, how cruel of Zelmira to desert him!"

"You think so, dear Miss Devereux?" replied Hardress, "could you love ugliness—deformity!"

"I know not," she said; "indeed I cannot at all put myself into the position of the Beauty, therefore it is impossible for me to say; but I can imagine kindness and goodness making even ugliness lovable."

"Do you know, Miss Devereux, that I have likened myself to that poor Beast—yes! to him in his misery!"

"You!" Sybil said, and she laughed.

"Do not laugh," he answered, quite fiercely, "Yes," he continued, "I am like him, frightful—aye, hideous to look at—loathsome no doubt—"

"Mr. Fitz Hugh!" interrupted Sybil, in deprecating accents.

"Yes, I am all that," he proceeded to say, "and you know well that I am; but" and his accents softened, "I have a heart as warm, as tender, as that possessed by the frightful monster in the story—I could love as well—as devotedly; and, oh! Miss Devereux, when I wander in this dark spot for hours, solitary and miserable, I am like the poor Azor, lonely, wretched, waiting for one who once deigned to

look kindly upon me.—How I wish sometimes I could lay me down under the shade of that white rose tree and die; for there is no Zelmira to bid me live for her."

Poor Sybil, astonished and distressed, knew not what to say—how to answer this touching appeal, and I felt that I had done wrong in allowing the conversation to last so long. I came forward, much to her relief, but to the evident discomfiture of Hardress, who cast upon me a glance of sinister import.

That evening Albert remarked;

"How pale and grave you look, dear Sybil!"

She blushed, but said nothing.

The above incident certainly made a great impression on Sybil—that fairy tale told in a manner quite indescribable! No one could imagine the eloquence of the youth, but those who heard it; and it had highly excited her uninitiated imagination. And young as Sybil was, and innocent of all such thoughts and feelings as agitated the heart of the narrator, still she was an embryo woman; and what woman, however backward in her ideas, is not more ready to receive the impression of the tender passion, than any other feeling? I could perceive by a glance, that the young girl was powerfully affected by the scene. She was very sorry for Hardress, who she always rather liked—and no wonder, for what heart could withstand such perfect devotion! and her feelings were pained by witnessing the unfeigned wretchedness of the young man.

She said very little on the subject to me, and never mentioned it to Albert; but I believe it weighed upon her mind, and was not soon, if ever, forgotten by her. Often, often did I wish—aye, that vain act—*wish*, that the scene had never taken place. Why did I allow the Irish boy to tell the fairy tale—and that I—shame upon me!—should stand by, listening, with all the interest of a child!

A day or two after the event recorded, Mrs. Devereux informed me of a plan which gave me the greatest satisfaction. They had decided, she said, upon leaving Oakleigh Court for a year. Albert had suggested the idea for the advantage of Sybil. We were to spend some time at the sea-side, and then proceed to London, and there winter, in order that masters might be procured to forward her different studies.

Albert's wishes were ever law at Oakleigh, and his judgment was ever good, and discreet beyond his years. His clear sightedness quickly discerned the errors, in the system pursued, with regard to her he loved, with all the increasing ardor of his heart. He felt for the fair young girl, doomed to live a life of such dull seclusion, and determined to break through it. It was a difficult task to make Mrs. Devereux give up her favorite plan of hiding her child from every eye, until the moment arrived, which she had fixed in her own mind, as the proper period to make her appearance in the world. However it was at length managed, much to the satisfaction of all. To Sybil the idea of the change was enchantment!



## CHAPTER XIII.

Sweet youth! sweet youth! no need  
 Hast thou of such a mould,  
 Of such an air as sculptors old  
 On god or goddess cast—that thrilled  
 With life, with thought, with beauty filled.  
 In simplest form thy power is shown,  
 Thou sweet—almighty youth.—HOWITT,

A YEAR had passed away—a year which made many changes in my pupil. At that age every day does something. There is no standing still. Like spring, the beautiful emblem of youth, each hour brings forth fresh buds, fresh blossoms, all tending to the embellishment and perfection of the approaching summer.

To Sybil change of scene was truly new life. It was, however, with a degree of such feverish excitement, she looked on all around, that Mrs. Devereux might at once have been convinced, how injudicious was that system of seclusion in which her daughter had been trained.

The mind of the young girl was so completely distracted by the perfect novelty of every object which met her astonished gaze, that it was next to impossible to sober it to any grave pursuit. Then again, her simplicity, her complete ignorance of *les usages du monde* appeared almost like *gaucherie*, in a girl of such womanly appearance.

But, as if bent on acting by the rule of contrary, Mrs. Devereux had determined upon spending some months at Brighton. This gay town was the very last spot one might have expected to have been selected for the first emigration of the young recluse; but the good lady had not been at Brighton since she was herself a child, and in her mind only associated its recollection, with the little quiet fishing hamlet, such as it was at that period, when the advantage of the residence consisted in its retirement, and the salubrious air wafted with such balmy freshness over the thymescented downs.

Mrs. Devereux had never embodied in her imagination, the idea of the acquired extent of Brighton; above all was she ignorant of the increased publicity of that most popular of watering places; had she but known what a monster the little, quiet village had become, never would she have chosen it for the scene of her fair child's first transportation from her secluded home. And truly, what with that delicious air, so pure, so sparkling, which is ever so exhilarating to the senses—the constant excitement of the kaleidoscope sort of scene, ever passing—the sea, the horses, carriages, people!—I expected my rustic pupil would end in a brain fever.

As for sitting down quietly to study, that was an utter impossibility—she was completely unhinged; and Mrs. Devereux, when she looked upon Sybil's eager countenance, and noted its restless, excited expression—the large eyes dilated with curiosity and wonder—her complexion glowing with excitement—heartily wished herself back at Oakleigh, and inwardly repented, not having taken Mr. Devereux' advice, when he urged her to visit the place with him alone, before she decided upon it as an abode for six months.

We certainly should have soon taken our

leave of Brighton, had not a large house been engaged for a lengthened period; besides, the enormous retinue of servants, with all the paraphernalia attached to a large establishment, had arrived, and Mrs. Devereux was too little used to the trouble of moving to be able to summon up courage for so formidable an undertaking again so shortly—so at Brighton we remained *mal gre bon gre!*

It appeared as if, on leaving Oakleigh, the restraints which had so long bound Sybil's every action, were at once burst asunder. That which was easy to accomplish and maintain in that retired place, became a matter of impossibility elsewhere.

Totally out of the question was it that my pupil could remain unseen; equally impossible unnoticed. She was now nearly sixteen, and my readers may imagine her at that period as one of the most beautiful creatures perhaps ever created. Yes, truly lovely was Sybil Devereux at that period! Her stature rose above the usual standard; indeed she might have been deemed too tall had her carriage not been so splendid. Her health, thanks to the freedom of her country life, had ever been perfect, and this circumstance imparted strength and elasticity to her limbs. The young creature had consequently none of the slouching, awkward gait, so constantly accompanying great height in early youth—her figure was firm and upright.

The perfect innocence of Sybil's mind prevented all feeling of shyness. She was as unconscious as the merest child, and as she walked abroad along the crowded cliffs, heeded nought save her own complete enjoyment. Her eyes rested fearlessly on every object; all was so new—people as well as things. I had great difficulty in restraining the exuberance of her admiration and delight; and how well can I recal the expression of her countenance as she walked, as if treading upon air by my side! No wonder that she attracted the admiring gaze of all passers by.

Mrs. Devereux insisted upon her daughter being dressed as plainly and, as unpretendingly as it was possible; but the very peculiarity of seeing so womanly a figure, so childishly attired, drew, perhaps, greater attention than if her costume had been more in unison with her appearance.

As she proceeded on her way, she was wild with pleasure. Her eyes, truly dancing with the joy with which her heart was overflowing, roved restlessly hither and thither—her face redolent with smiles—the white teeth which, the form of her mouth constantly displayed, rendered still more conspicuous, by the numerous exclamations of admiration, which burst from her lips, as some new object passed before her sight. It was indeed a long time before she could compose her ideas into anything like order, during which period she was far too much engrossed with wonder and amusement, to notice that she herself was a subject of the utmost attention to others; but the moment came when she could not fail to make the discovery.

"Mademoiselle," she said, the first time the

fact seemed to dawn upon her—or rather that her mind had leisure to give it a thought, “why did that gentleman stare so at me? Ah! there he is looking again!” and Sybil, with an air of wondering curiosity, returned the gaze of the dashing hussar, who, with his gay dress and moustached lip, added to his somewhat rudely marked scrutiny, had thus attracted her attention.

“Never mind, my dear,” I answered, rather hastily, “you should never take notice of such kind of observation; indeed you ought to appear not even to see it; and above all, I beseech you, never turn your head to look after people when they pass; it is neither proper nor lady-like.”

“But, Mademoiselle,” Sybil persisted, “why may I not look at people, as well as they at me? I am sure they stare enough.”

“Don’t argue the point,” I continued, almost angrily; “when you have gained more experience of the world, you will then be able to enter more fully into what is due towards *les convenances de la société*; until then, you must obey implicitly the advice which is given you.”

Sybil looked at me curiously and with a heightened color, but she forbore pressing the subject. Some instinctive suspicion probably dawned upon her mind, and henceforward she seemed to profit in a measure by my injunction, for no demonstrative notice did she again take of similar incidents. But I fear that was the extent of good I had achieved; for well could I perceive that my words had only more fully awakened her perception on points before unregarded; and I know that whilst she strove to obey my orders, not to *seem* to observe, when—as so constantly happened—she became the subject of such pointed regard—she did observe—and with feelings, which however natural, were very different from those that Mrs. Devereux would have approved; and truly, though Sybil’s head would be erected even higher than usual with an air of dignity, a richer color spreading itself over her face, her eyes also sparkling more brightly than before, as she turned to address me with an arch smile, there would now mingle in her look and tone no slight share of gratification.

“But what could be done?” I thought, “how avoid such consequences? She is beautiful, and must know it some of these days—how far better that such knowledge should dawn upon her in the present innocent state of her heart, and that her mind should be gradually prepared for the reception of a truth, which acts as an intoxicating draught to every female imagination, especially when unexpectedly it bursts upon the perception at an age when vanity, that natural heritage of woman, is most easily excited; then would not the charm of such a gift be indeed likely to prove dangerous?”

Mrs. Devereux most probably would have rejected this idea, as contrary to her prescribed notions on the subject, but she had little opportunity of seeing her daughter under such circumstances; for, at home, Sybil was still kept almost entirely out of the way of visitors, and rarely accompanied her mother out of doors, except in the close carriage.

And thus passed the greatest part of the time

we remained at Brighton, but the last month of our sojourn there, was one of the most agreeable in my remembrance; one of those bright specks which remain undimmed upon the recollection, through the wear and tear of a chequered existence. My kind friend Miss Howard had become the wife of Sir William Mordaunt, a gentleman of large property, and was spending some weeks at Brighton, for the sake of the benefit of the sea air for her infant son; and my pupil and I were allowed to be very often with her.

Mrs. Devereux had always been very partial to Lady Mordaunt, of whose sense and judgment she entertained a high opinion; and she was even somewhat persuaded by her niece that it was expedient to permit Sybil to mix a little more with those around her. The sisters of Sir William arrived on a visit to their brother, and then succeeded a period, which, in comparison to her former life, was dissipation to Sybil. Lady Mordaunt suggested to her Aunt, the advantage it might be to her young cousin, to associate with her sisters-in-law, who had been well brought up—had excellent manners, and were clever and good tempered. In consequence of this report, we were still suffered occasionally to frequent the house of Lady Mordaunt, though it had become the resort of a gayer set, since the two handsome, lively young ladies had added to its attractions; and to my astonishment, we even found ourselves more than once, with a merry party, listening to the military band playing on the Steyne. The Miss Mordaunts were in truth very good-natured, and would often supplicate Mrs. Devereux, and by amiable importunity wring from her a reluctant consent to various little amusements for the tall girl, and her ugly little governess, who always kept in the back ground—silent beholders of the gay doings which passed around them. And, as such passive performers in the scene, Mrs. Devereux objected not greatly to these innovations on our usual routine. It could not do Sybil any harm, to walk quietly between herself and me, or perhaps Lady Mordaunt, perfectly independent of the laughing and talking going on amongst others, and receiving only the occasional notice generally bestowed upon a girl who is still in the *school-room*, amongst a showy group of young ladies, who are out.

Whilst this state of affairs continued, all went on well, and Sybil and her governess led a much more cheerful life than heretofore; a life which was equally new to both; but it was doomed not to be of long continuance, though, strange to say, Mrs. Devereux was not the real origin of its interruption.

It seemed that gradually many began to discover the charms which lurked beneath the large straw bonnet and ample shawl of the “tall girl,” and I learnt from Lady Mordaunt, that Sybil was becoming an object of much curiosity and observation amongst the gentlemen. Soon it was well known, that she was the sole heiress to immense wealth, and such knowledge alone is sufficient to encircle a woman with a halo of glorious perfections.

I certainly did perceive latterly that one or



two young men would occasionally linger behind, and walk by Lady Mordaunt's side, or even by that of Mrs. Devereux, whose forbidding aspect rendered such a manoeuvre, one would have imagined, no service of pleasure; and Sybil, who had not a notion of shyness, would, with the natural gaiety and innocence of her heart, occasionally join in the conversation.

#### CHAPTER XIV.

"Beware what earth calls happiness—beware  
All joys, but joys that never can expire;  
Who builds on less than an immortal base,  
Fond as he seems, condemns his joys to death."

In human hearts, what holder thought can rise  
Than man's presumption, on to-morrow's dawn."

YOUNG.

WE were not to return to Oakleigh Court, but to spend the winter in London, during which time Sybil's education was to receive its finishing touch from masters of every description. There, in the imprisonment of a back drawing-room, only exchanged for exercise in the park, during its unfrequented hours, or in the square, Miss Devereux passed that season, so closely verging on the period for which the mother was thus so sedulously—I cannot say, judiciously—husbanding the fair flower—the attainment of her seventeenth birthday.

At length we were suffered to prepare for our return to beautiful Oakleigh.

With what happiness did Sybil and I talk over the delight of that restoration to liberty! for such it would be to us; and to hear my pupil speak of all the various pleasures she there anticipated, no one would have imagined, she was ought other, than the little girl I had first beheld issuing from the heap of hay on the memorable evening of my arrival at the court.

"My dear Sybil," said Mrs. Devereux, one day when her daughter had been enlarging in a similar strain, upon the delights that awaited her at Oakleigh, "I trust there are more important enjoyments in store for you than those you enumerate. Rabbits, birds and flowers, are very well for the recreation of a child; but for one of your age, whose mind should have advanced in proportion with her years, you cannot, I hope, have continued to retain much value for such frivolities."

"Oh no, of course not, Mamma," replied the young girl, somewhat abashed, "they are not the principal objects, which make me rejoice at the thoughts of finding myself at Oakleigh. There will be old friends to meet again—Hardress Fitz Hugh, for instance! How glad I shall be to see his clever, odd, ugly face, and to laugh at his strange dialect, and still stranger speeches."

I had turned my eyes on Mrs. Devereux's face as Sybil thus spoke, with an instinctive misgiving as to its reception by that lady, and I was not far wrong; for her countenance assumed the shocked expression so easily excited upon it, but with which now mingled a mixture of concern and displeasure. She did not speak for some moments, but appeared as if consider-

ing that the importance of the case required the most prudential care in its treatment.

At length, clearing her voice, she spoke in a tone which made Sybil start; so unconscious was she of aught in her speech, being in any way calculated to create a sensation of displeasure.

"Sybil!" exclaimed Mrs. Devereux, "I should have imagined that the person you have just mentioned, would be the very last to occupy your mind for a moment; far less before one whom it is so much more natural, you should have mentioned, as a legitimate cause for rendering your return to Oakleigh so attractive. Are you not aware that Albert is to join us there, soon after our arrival?"

"Oh yes, Mamma! dear Albert! of course, that will be the chief of all the delights I anticipate, but I was only speaking of those inferior ones, which I should find on first going home. I know Albert will not be there for some time, whereas Hardress—"

"Mr. Fitz Hugh!" interrupted Mrs. Devereux in a frigid voice, "will not be there, nor do I think he will ever be at Oakleigh again. I did not deem it necessary to inform you of the fact—for what interest can Miss Devereux feel in that wild, uncouth Irish youth? that he has left Mr. Melville some months."

"Has he indeed?" exclaimed Sybil. "Poor Hardress! how sorry I am. Is he really never to return, dear Mamma?"

"Never! nor do I consider it a matter of the slightest regret. The young man, we heard from Mr. Melville, had of late become an objectionable neighbor, and I esteem it an advantage, that our acquaintance is now totally at an end; it is neither probable, nor desirable, that we should ever meet again."

Sybil did not presume openly to express her regret, after this severe speech of her mother, but she could not forbear demanding from me some sympathy, by a glance which plainly spoke of her concern, at the idea of never again beholding her good-natured, amusing friend.

I learnt afterwards more fully that it was as Mrs. Devereux had informed Sybil, with regard to young Fitz Hugh. He had soon become too much, in every way, for his gentle tutor, Mr. Melville. Immediately after the departure of the family from the Court, the mood of the young man had completely changed. He was savage, intractable, and recklessly pursued any path, but that of the decent propriety incumbent on the inmate of a virtuous clergyman. His moral conduct had caused the good man much trouble, and he soon wrote to Lord Castlerosse, urging the removal of his nephew to a sphere, where his intellectual powers, which were immense, might have a wider range, and which, if thus confined, might be enervated or overwhelmed by the animal passions of his nature, which were as violent as they were ill-regulated. Lord Castlerosse, had attended to this suggestion, and Hardress Fitz Hugh, was now at Cambridge.

We found ourselves again at Oakleigh—beautiful Oakleigh! which looked so bright and lovely, after the (to us) dull town we had quitted. But after the first happy day of our

arrival, it scarcely seemed to be the same place, such a new aspect did every object assume.

It was as if Sybil's whole being was suddenly expected to take a new turn; she who had before been so sedulously kept *the child*, was now to be, all at once, transformed into *the woman*.

Her dress was new modelled, and every thing like childishness of deportment carefully discouraged. The strict routine of study, to which she had lately been accustomed, was much relaxed, and in its place, she passed the time in the company of her mother, who seemed, by a course of lectures (for such a form did the almost constant tone of her conversation assume) evidently applying to some important purpose, to endeavor to prepare her daughter's mind for some serious crisis in her existence.

There was too an air of such solemn mystery pervading all that Mrs. Devereux said or did in reference to her child, that I began to make my own conjectures; indeed, to have a shrewd suspicion, respecting the nature of the subject, though not admitted by the good lady into her confidence.

I was of course sufficiently discreet not to hazard an appearance of curiosity on the topic, and we spent the three following months in extreme quiet and monotony.

Mr. Devereux was much from home, being occupied, as I learnt, by business connected with the majority of Albert Lennard, which had just taken place.

Sybil often expressed her wonder that Albert had not visited them for so long a time, and would sometimes even question her mother on the subject. Then Mrs. Devereux would reply with a half-suppressed smile of mystery, "that there were good reasons for every thing—that Sybil might be sure, however, that Albert's time was well employed;" and Sybil's eyes would sparkle with the affectionate pride of a sister, as did my own—when we heard how Albert was distinguishing himself at Oxford, by his great and noble talents, and that he gave every promise of becoming an eminent character.

In spite of my foresight with regard to the intended destiny of my loved pupil, I returned from a private interview, requested by Mrs. Devereux, a few days after we had been informed of the one fixed for Albert's final return, with an ominous feeling of depression, which I blamed myself for allowing to enter my heart.

On the day of Albert Lennard's arrival, Sybil would attain her seventeenth birthday. And I was sad, though I had heard a confirmation of what had been my anxious hope! But certainly there were circumstances concerning the communication, very different from the arrangement I had formed in my own imagination; my busy brain had chalked out a contrary plan.

My scheme was, that my dear pupil should, for two years at least, taste of the society of the world, in maiden freedom. I wished her to see, and to be seen; to meet with admiration, aye, even love, from many—for how could she be seen and not loved? I would have had her make acquaintance with the world; the people, and even the ways of the world. But there should have been one by her side, to whom, "her heart untrammelled," would cling; one

who would have shone like some bright star before which all lesser lights grow dim; his love, her shield—against which all other attacks must have fallen harmless! And then I glanced forward to that joyful time, when the young girl, after having looked well around, would own that there was none so good, so noble, so worthy, to be called by the sacred name of husband, as the cherished companion of her childhood. Truly my enthusiasm on the score of Albert Lennard's perfections, carried my ideas of his superiority, over every other human being, and all those who knew him well would vouch for my not having exaggerated his merits, and freely allow that he was—I can hardly use a meaner term—a godlike creature!

"Mademoiselle," began Mrs. Devereux, in a tone which at once informed me of the importance of the communication she was about to make, "it is but due to one whom both Mr. Devereux and myself, have learnt, with good reason, to esteem as a friend, that you should no longer be ignorant of that which so materially concerns our Sybil."

Mrs. Devereux paused, and I poured forth my fervent thanks for this kind and considerate testimony to my poor services. She heard me with less coldness than she generally manifested towards any extraordinary ebullition of feeling, and then continued speaking—

"You may, probably, before this have divined, that Albert Lennard has, from his childhood, been desired by us, as the husband of our daughter."

I bowed my head in assent, and she proceeded with her communication.

"The period for the fulfilment of that long cherished hope, is now, I trust, near at hand; for Albert, having received our permission, comes next week to woo our Sybil; and we have promised not to forestall his wishes, but to allow him to be the first to open her eyes to the happy prospect before her, dear girl; and then—for with their intimate knowledge of each other, long courtship will be unnecessary—their union will soon follow."

I was startled at the very expeditious arrangements which these words seemed to express, and could hardly believe I understood them properly.

"Miss Devereux will first be introduced into society?" I ventured to say.

Mrs. Devereux looked some shocked surprise at my suggestion, and answered,

"You mistake me, Mademoiselle. I said that the union between Mr. Lennard and my daughter, would take place almost immediately after the proposal had been formally made and accepted. There can be little further preparation required, for those whose engagement has subsisted, it may truly be said, from their earliest childhood."

"Forgive me, Madam," I replied. "I may, no doubt, be wrong, but I always thought that some acquaintance with, and experience of the world, were considered advisable for a young person before entering upon so momentous and important a position, as that of matrimony."

"Yes, Mademoiselle," Mrs. Devereux resumed, in a tone of condescending indulgence



towards my ignorance, "I know that is often the opinion—the erroneous opinion I consider it—of many—I think the world the last school for a young wife—the most pernicious scene, into which, those sensible of the important nature of the holy state of wedlock, could send an inexperienced, innocent creature. I am perfectly convinced that the race of English wives and mothers would be greatly improved, if the plan I have been enabled to adopt for my daughter, was, when equally feasible, more generally followed. Yes! I am thankful for having been allowed the blessing of rearing to womanhood, a being, who, if she act up to the education she has received—as far as human excellence extends, *must make a perfect wife.*"

Mrs. Devereux paused for a moment; but on my remaining silent, thus continued to enlarge on this engrossing subject—

"Albert will, indeed, be blest as he deserves, with a wife perfectly pure in heart and mind; not the butterfly creature that has flittered about the world—its bright colors dimmed and polluted, and ill-fitted to do honor to the name of wife to such a man, or to render her husband happy! I thank you sincerely, Mademoiselle, for the manner in which you have forwarded my views with regard to the education of our child. You have executed my wishes with implicit obedience—although often, I am aware, your inexperience has caused your reason to rebel against the wisdom of some of my ideas—or prejudices, as no doubt you may have deemed them; but I hope that you will be rewarded for any sacrifices your own judgment has been called upon to make, in order to go hand-in-hand with me, by beholding the bright specimen our Sybil will exhibit, of my plan of education."

## CHAPTER XV.

Fair as the forms, that, wove in fancy's loom,  
Float in light vision, round the Poet's head.

How sweetly mutable—how brightly wild  
The liquid lustre darted from her eyes!  
Each look—each motion, waked a new born grace,  
That o'er her form, its transient glory cast:  
Some lovelier wonder soon usurped the place,  
Chased by a charin, still lovelier than the last,—

MASON.

"It is nearly two years since I have seen Albert," said Sybil, on the morning of her birthday. "Mademoiselle, do you remember his last arrival here—what joy we felt at the idea of seeing him? And to-day he comes again!"

A slight sigh heaved from her breast. "And your joy is not so great?" I asked, with an inward feeling of some anxiety.

"Not quite so unmixed," she replied, laughing; "for it seems to me, that two years must have made such a difference in him; now he has become a man."

"Well, Sybil! and you have become a woman; therefore, he will have as much reason to complain of the change as yourself," I said.

"Oh! no!" she replied, earnestly; "he will find no change in me, though I may be taller and older than when he last returned—no change in my feelings towards him; but he, I fear, will

have become so far above me, that he will scorn the affection he once loved to receive from his little sister."

"I do not think that is at all probable, Sybil," I remarked.

"Do you not think so?" she gladly exclaimed. "do you imagine we may be the same towards each other as we were—love each other as well?"

"Perhaps better!" I answered as gravely as I could.

"Oh, that is impossible! But, Mademoiselle," she continued, "you have made me much happier. I thought it would be so melancholy to find Albert grown into a cold, proud, man, whilst my heart was as warm and sisterly towards him, as on that day when we walked in the park with poor Hardress Fitz Hugh, awaiting his arrival. And Hardress! do you remember how cross he was, when he found out that Albert was not my brother? Shall we do the same to-day? Shall we set forth to meet Albert?"

I hesitated.

"We must see what your mamma says about it," I at length said; for I suspected that Mrs. Devereux, had formed a very different arrangement—and so it proved. Albert Lennard was expected about the dinner hour, and when the dressing bell rang, Sybil found herself engaged in a manner very unlike that merry interval, when, two years before, in anticipation of the same event, she was wandering about the park, free as a very wood nymph.

Her dressing room was now the scene of action: its interior, bearing every demonstration that the business of the toilette was going on within; and a matter of the greatest importance it seemed to be, judging by the anxious care with which the undertaking was superintended.

Yes! there sat Sybil, for the first time it might almost be said, undergoing the fatigue of a *grande toilette*—learning "*qu'il faut souffrir pour être belle*;" for some patient endurance, was certainly necessary to be called into requisition, whilst under the hands of two not well practised abigail, and the fidgetty interference of Mrs. Devereux.

The only regret I experienced as, I followed Sybil down stairs, was, that there would be so few eyes to admire and appreciate her loveliness; and I was not the only person I soon suspected, into whose mind some such idea (alas! savoring too much of vanity) had entered.

"Well, Sybil!" Mr. Devereux exclaimed, when, after his first expressive start of astonishment at the sight of the beautiful apparition, which appeared before him in the drawing room, he stretched forth his hand with a smile of criticizing examination, through which, however, admiring pride was plainly discernible—"you are really very splendid.—Albert ought to feel much honored. Why, *la belle Assemblée* could not require more from you, than this *soigné* costume; we ought to have Fortunatus's cap, to transport us to Almacks or St. James's."

Sybil, with a blushing smile and sparkling eyes, glanced at her form, reflected in the large mirror; then, leaning caressingly over her father, said;

"And when does darling papa mean to take his Sybil to those gay places?"

"Oh! we must see about that!" Mr. Devereux answered playfully, whilst he turned, with a glance of significance, to observe the effect of his daughter's speech upon his wife, who had entered, but unobserved by Sybil, who otherwise would not have ventured to utter it. The attention of all, however, was at that moment, attracted by sounds, which announced the expected arrival to be at hand.

Mr. Devereux hastened from the room.

Sybil looked towards her mother with a heightened color, as if for permission to follow her father; but Mrs. Devereux, in whose countenance, in spite of her struggles to assume a dignified composure, I could discern strong marks of agitated expectation, signed to her to remain, and we sat in impatient suspense, for the few moments which elapsed ere the door was opened, and Mr. Devereux returned, accompanied by Albert Lennard—the same in all, save an increased manliness of person, and strength of beauty.

After an affectionate, though somewhat hurried greeting to Mrs. Devereux, his eyes having, on his entrance, sought out the form of Sybil, with nervous warmth of manner, he hastened forward to meet her. My pupil, catching something of the same manner from the agitated Albert, though she at first advanced with frank and evident pleasure, now blushing and bashfully returned his salutation; and in the deportment of the young people towards each other, in the short interview that followed, there was an evident constraint, which left on Sybil's countenance a slight shade of disappointment during the time Albert was absent, preparing for dinner; she probably feared the dreaded change had actually taken place.

Albert had indeed become a man, and she was to receive from him no more, that frank, brotherly affection, cherished so long in her imagination.

## CHAPTER XVI.

"They had roamed forth together; the bright dew  
Was on the flowers that he knelt, and gave  
Sweet tribute to his idol,"

L. E. L.

Albert had recovered his equanimity when he next appeared amongst us, and as he sat by Sybil's side at dinner, her countenance soon became irradiated with bright and joyous animation, for there was apparently brotherly warmth of feeling and affection, to her heart's content, in his every word and look towards herself. The only deference she could detect in his manner, from that of days of yore, was a greater degree of *empréssément* in his attentions, and a more deferential consideration of her remarks and opinions.

"Albert has become very polite," she laughingly remarked, when we had repaired to the drawing-room; "he finds fault with nothing about me this time, as he used invariably to do on his former returns; all I said he seemed to think charming. So, I suppose, he considers I

have become a woman at last, and, therefore, entitled to some respect. Well! I am glad I have lost nothing, but only gained a little dignity in his eyes, by my increase of years."

Mrs. Devereux compressed her lips, looked first at her daughter and then at me, with an expression which implied a somewhat anxious surprise at such extreme childish unconsciousness. As for me, I could not suppress my smiles, as Sybil continued so freely and innocently to descant on the improvement in Albert's looks.

"How proud I am of possessing such a brother!" she exclaimed.

"Brother! My dear Sybil, Albert is not your brother," interrupted Mrs. Devereux, with an earnest gravity which amused me, and which evidently sent Sybil's thoughts back to the displeasure Albert had once expressed, when the same term had been applied to him by herself; for after excusing the expression to her mother, she said with a smile,

"I wonder if Albert will be offended *now* with the title; but I am sure he is become too wise for such boyish caprice."

Sybil had not long to wait to be enlightened on this point, nor Mrs. Devereux, to grudge her daughter the child-like unconsciousness it had been her own work to foster.

The gentlemen were so long in rejoining us, that we felt assured that only a peculiarly interesting conversation could have been the cause of their detention. At length they made their appearance, both with countenances expressing consciousness. Albert lingered for a few minutes by Mrs. Devereux' side, addressing her, but in an absent manner; for his eyes were wandering impatiently towards the window where Sybil stood, looking out upon the lovely moonlit night, and soon he was by her side.

"Let us have a stroll," he said, in a would be careless tone, after remaining for a few moments in silence.

"Oh, yes!" was Sybil's willing response. "Come, Mademoiselle!" and in a moment she had stepped out on to the balustraded terrace, which surrounded the house, followed by Albert.

I knew too well who the "us" had been meant to include, to accept her invitation, and soon the sound of the steps of the young pair on the gravel, were dying away in the distance—Sybil's clear musical voice, ringing with its harmonious tones, as they descended to the parterre, where I could soon discern them, fitting amidst the shrubs and flowers; the white figure of Sybil glittering conspicuously beneath the silvery light cast by the moon on every object—her merry, joyous laugh breaking in, ever and anon, with the conversation carried on between them.

I looked back on Mr. and Mrs. Devereux. With their heads close together, they were engaged in earnest discourse in a suppressed tone of voice; therefore I retained my position at the window, till, after the lapse perhaps of a quarter of an hour or more, I was summoned to Mrs. Devereux' side, by the question—

"Mademoiselle, has Sybil her shawl?"

She had not, and with her light clothing it



was considered very imprudent; so the bell was rung, and orders were given for the shawl to be brought, and then I was requested by the prudent, methodical lady, to "be so very kind as to carry it to Miss Devereux," and at the same time to inform the moonlight wanderers, that tea was ready; but if they preferred remaining out a little longer they were at liberty to do so.

Mr. Devereux made an effort to save me from the very unnecessary mission, by pleading the mildness of the evening air, and the utter want of interest which he felt sure the youthful pair would take in the arrival of the tea; but the maternal anxiety of Mrs. Devereux prevailed, and with somewhat reluctant steps I sallied forth, with the shawl on my arm, and looked around, in order to direct my progress aright—for all was silent now; no gay laugh was heard to serve as my guide.

I had advanced to the edge of the terrace, intending to explore the *parterre* below, and then—though I saw them not, the low, earnest murmuring of Albert's voice fell on my ear, proceeding from a grotto erected at the extremity of the lawn; interrupted by these words, spoken in Sybil's clear, sweet voice, but uttered in a pleading expostulating tone—

"But, Albert, why not? why not love you as my brother?"

And then again that other voice resumed its deep, and now, still more earnest manner.

I turned away unseen, and, strange to say, with a shudder, and a feeling for which I could not then account, but the sweet, imploring tone of Sybil floated back on my imagination, like a dying fall of dirge-like music heard in the air—a mystical prognostic of the farewell to life or happiness.

\* \* \* \* \*

I returned to the drawing room with the shawl still on my arm, and said, with a smile, that I thought the young people would soon return, and, therefore, it was a pity to disturb them, especially as they were now under the shelter of the grotto; and Mrs. Devereux seemed satisfied on this point.

She glanced at her husband with a look of significance, without making any objection, but fidgetted on her chair, and cast many an anxious glance towards the window, during the twenty minutes which still elapsed before the re-appearance of her daughter.

Mr. Devereux quietly read the newspaper, though from him I could also occasionally detect a quick, anxious glance, and a slight tremulousness of voice, when he now and then addressed himself to me.

At length the crushing of the gravel walk broke the silence, and we all looked up with a would-be easy air of unconcern, to greet the absentees.

I had been picturing to my imagination the countenance of Sybil on her return; her youthful face, glowing with the conscious bashful confusion, consequent on an unexpected, startling declaration, such as I knew in that short absence must have saluted her ears. Perhaps she would retreat from the room in a flood of tears, or some such heroine like act. But no—

as a beautiful apparition, the silvery rays of the moon, like a halo, still lingering round her, my sweet pupil appeared at the window, and then glided in amongst us, with swanlike graceful movements; her features pale, her countenance bearing the expression of dreamy bewilderment.

In silence she seated herself by her mother. Albert followed her. Never have I beheld a face so irradiated with bliss as Albert's displayed, when, with a conscious, happy smile, chastened, however, by a tinge of soft, anxious emotion, as if he would direct attention from Sybil, he endeavored to converse with easy composure. It was only when accidentally called upon to address some word or little attention to the statue-like girl, that his prepossession seemed to desert him.

Mrs. Devereux, whose eyes were constantly fixed upon her daughter with an anxious scrutiny she could not repress, proposed to retire to rest at an early hour, urging, as a reason, Albert's long and fatiguing journey. I then fully expected a scene to ensue in the dressing-room, to which Sybil followed her mother, to take leave for the night.

But, no. The consideration of Mrs. Devereux, as a mother, was certainly most exemplary. A scene would have destroyed her child's repose for the night, which her present state so much required, and, as if to avoid a chance of it, when I was about to leave them together, she abruptly dismissed Sybil with an affectionate embrace, saying—"Now, make haste and go to bed, my dear; you may come into my room the first thing in the morning."

Sybil showed no great desire for an *eclaircissement*, but when I accompanied her as usual to her apartment, had lighted her candles, and was about to quit the room, I was recalled by the faint exclamation of "Mademoiselle! dear Mademoiselle!"

The fountain was unlocked, and Sybil threw herself on my bosom, with a passionate burst of tears. I allowed them to flow uninterrupted for a time, then soothed her agitation by my caresses and playful expostulations; and then she poured forth her tale, in spite of all my attempts to divert her from it, knowing that I had not the first claim to hear it from her lips. But there is a natural sympathy, stronger than the ties of duty or relationship, and the history flowed forth irrepressibly.

"Albert had uttered strange things to her that night," she sobbed forth; "Oh! that she had never heard them—why could she not remain his sister still! Become his wife!—his wife?—fancy her, his wife. It was such a strange idea—it had quite upset her—she could not reconcile herself to the thought."

"My own dear Sybil!" I exclaimed, with deep concern, as the fabric of hopes of years, fondly reared by so many, seemed about to be demolished; and then I remembered, with wonder, the happy look of Albert after the evening's *tete-a-tete*; for from what I now witnessed, I could not imagine that ought agreeable to a suitor's feelings, could have transpired. After a pause, I continued—

"And did you tell Mr. Lennard all this?"

"Yes—no!" she answered, her speech still interrupted by her tears. "I was so surprised at first—then so frightened—half angry! I was on the point of telling him that I did not wish to be his wife, and begging him never again to talk such nonsense—but then, just at that moment, the moon shone out so brightly on Albert's anxious, beautiful face. A few minutes before, he had said—I can never love you again as a sister, Sybil," and the sentence sounded so dreadful in my ear. I felt that I could not bear to lose for ever the love of one so good—so noble. I hid my face; but when he next asked me, in a tone so earnest—so entreating, if I could not love him as he wished, I murmured forth I know not what; it was something, however, which seemed to satisfy him, for he thanked me so gratefully, and went on talking in a voice which sounded like music. I scarce knew what he said; I felt as though I were in a dream: and former days, and such trifling incidents connected with them, came floating back upon my memory. Once—I suppose it was because my eyes were fixed upon some roses which were peeping into the grotto, the night dew glittering upon them like silver drops—I thought of that story of Beauty and the Beast, which poor Hardress Fitz Hugh once told me. I could almost have fancied in my bewilderment, that it was him I had again heard, repeating it by my side; and then I turned and beheld a face—oh, how different!" and she smiled through her still glistening tears.

This was the innocent confession I received from the young girl; and whether to be pleased or not with what it implied, I scarcely knew. But I retired to bed to dream again of what has so often since haunted my imagination—the scene which Sybil's description rendered it easy for the mind's eye to complete, with the glorious moonbeams lighting up every tree and flower of the vast parterre, and stealing into the mossy grotto upon those young beings—both "As young as beautiful, as beautiful as good, as good as young."

"Such was the light that shone o'er leaf and flower,  
In kindness Eden, when the gentlest pair,  
(In their Creator's image planted there,)  
Together walked or sat in sylvan bowers;  
Or, in the moon's mild lustre wondrous stood;  
And their great Maker 'saw that all was good.'"

It was well for Mrs. Devereux that she, by prudence, had warded off a scene that night. It saved her from the shock of witnessing the distress of her child; and though her object of gaining a good night's rest was defeated, as was evident by the languid eyes and pale cheeks of poor Sybil the following morning, still the first effervescence of excitement had been expended in her agitating interview with me. During the visions of that wakeful night, thoughts and feelings had probably risen in the heart of the young girl, which gradually presented to her imagination in a less startling light, the idea of becoming the wife of Albert; and though she nervously lingered ere answering the early summons to attend her mother in her *boudoir*, and then, with reluctant steps and timid looks, departed, I had seen enough in the expression of her conscious, blushing face on

our morning meeting, to satisfy me that all would go right in the important interview that was about to follow.

Nor was I wrong in my conjecture. In about an hour's time, the door of the school-room, in which I was sitting, opened, and Mrs. Devereux entered, with a countenance of most important dignity; through which, however, struggled a smile of heartfelt satisfaction. She led by the hand my sweet pupil, blushing, smiling, and tearful.

"Mademoiselle, you will breakfast here with Sybil this morning, if you please," said Mrs. Devereux, addressing me with a very significant air as she glanced at her daughter; "after which, be so good as to see that her toilette is arranged with greater care. I will then join you," and she left us together.

## CHAPTER XVII.

"And now  
I see thee standing at the altar—  
Thy robes are spotless—gems are on thy brow—  
Bright are thy blushes—thy faint accents falter—  
Awhile thy hazel eyes with tears are dim.  
Leaving a home of kindness and protection,  
But soon they smile, with bursting faith on him,  
Who was the treasure of thy young affection."

MRS. ABLY.

THE injunctions of Mrs. Devereux were obeyed. I avoided during the time Sybil remained alone with me, any reference to the events which had taken place; she soon therefore assumed a tolerable degree of composure—I could almost fancy I discerned a prouder erection of her stately head—a calm dignity of eye, as if the timid girl were already transformed into the beautiful woman, conscious of her power and dominion, and prepared to assume her queen-like sway.

I left her with her father and mother, when they appeared in the school room, and soon after I heard the trio descending to the library. The door closed, and Sybil's hand was placed by her parents in that of the impatient, happy lover, who there waited to receive this pledge of that most precious gift. Then praying God to bless them, with tears of joy, Mr. and Mrs. Devereux left the room.

It was a bright time—the one I am now describing—bright and blissful indeed for all; with no cloud, no shadow of a doubt as to its continuance.

Sweet Sybil! how interesting was it to watch her in her new position, while the free, confiding affection of a sister, still lingered around the deeper feelings, which the devotion of Albert, as a lover, could not long fail to call forth! But I will not weary the Reader by expatiating on that joyous season.

During that period the young *fiancee* was introduced for the first time to society, at an entertainment given by her parents, to the county neighbors; at which her striking appearance excited much admiration amongst the various guests, whose anxiety and curiosity to behold the heiress had been much augmented, by the entire and jealous seclusion in which she had



hitherto been kept. This interest was now enhanced by her present position—that of an affianced bride, for the circumstance had been formally announced to the company; and in consequence of the exclusiveness such a situation claimed, and more than all, the Diana like character of her beauty, it was curious to observe with what an awed and respectful reverence, the young girl was regarded by those, who had probably expected to behold in the attractions of Miss Devereux, more of the Hebe style of youthful loveliness, usually exemplified in their rural belles.

With what proud satisfaction did Albert's eyes rest upon her! I fancied that this respectful homage from all around, to his *fiancee*, was grateful to his feelings; it pleased him that she should be regarded as a sacred object. He too, with his intellectual superiority seemed to command a species of admiration in which respect was blended. That the two young beings were in every way formed for one another, was probably the thought of all who beheld them. It was a match indeed, bearing the impress of having been arranged in Heaven.

Two months after this period, many of the same party were assembled at Oakleigh Court as wedding guests, to behold the fulfilment of this fair omened union, upon which both Heaven and Earth seemed to smile.

My Readers may perhaps expect me to dwell at length on this day, so momentous in the annals of the family, whose history I am recording.

I could fill pages in descanting upon all the tender care—the anxiety, and fond solicitude showered so abundantly on the young bride. The hearts of my younger Readers might experience a sensation of envy, could they hear the description of the costly wedding *trousseau*—the princely gifts which came pouring in for her acceptance. And then the wedding, its pomp and ceremony—the village festival, &c., &c., &c. Yes all was splendor—joyfulness! and a magnificent day, with brilliant sunshine, ushered in the auspicious moment.

It was when the guests had departed, and we were left a quiet trio, in the then silent house, that we appeared to wake as out of a perplexing dream.

Was it a reality? The object on which our whole thoughts and energies had been fixed for so many years—the flower we had nurtured so tenderly, now that it had expanded in all its beauty, was it to be immediately transplanted into a stranger soil? Truly our occupation was gone for ever! In the prevailing excitement which had preceded this change, we had never given our minds time to dwell upon the possibility of our experiencing feelings of such utter bereavement—but now, I sat in my deserted school-room and wept.

Mrs. Devereux entered, and finding me thus employed, pursed up her mouth—put on a demure look, and was evidently preparing to read me a lecture on my child-like, unphilosophic behavior.

"Mademoiselle!" she began, but it would not do; she too burst into a paroxysm of tears, as she sank down on a seat by my side.

No circumstance so effectually draws two souls together as some such scene of natural emotion, it often completely breaks down the barrier, which difference of position and of character, may heretofore have interposed, and which even years of familiar intercourse may have failed to destroy. For my part, I can truly say, that from that hour, the excellent Mrs. Devereux and myself were bound together by the ties of the warmest attachment.

"We are very like spoilt children, dear Mademoiselle," she at length said, when, relieved by our outburst of emotion, we sat smiling through our tears, at our mutual weakness; "who having gained all for which they had before been ardently longing, sit down and cry, because this fulfilment of their wishes, leaves them nothing else to covet. We have launched our Sybil, the good and happy wife, for which we trained her, and now our care and anxiety are ended, and we have henceforth only to behold and enjoy the fruits of our labors. Yes, dear Mademoiselle, I say *we*, for I cannot but number you amongst those who have most right to such an enjoyment.—But it was concerning yourself I came to speak—your future plans."

I thanked her with a beating heart, and she continued,

"With no selfish disregard to your own interests have I considered what I am about to propose, though certainly myself most interested in your approval of my scheme. Cowper says—(Mrs. Devereux' favorite Poet, from whom she was ever quoting.)

"God gives to every man  
The virtue, temper, understanding, taste,  
That lifts him into life and lets him fall  
Just in the niche he was designed to fill."

You, Mademoiselle, have given proof that in that most laudable profession, the educating of youth, you are calculated to shine pre-eminently, and I am the last person who, for my own sake, should think myself justified in removing you from a sphere, in which you can so usefully employ the talents committed to your trust. But you are young, and the mind after exciting its energies as jealousy as yours have been exercised, during several years, requires some relaxation and repose, as well as leisure. Mr. Devereux is of opinion, and I begin to agree with him, that I should feel the want of a companion, during the intervals, which I must inevitably pass away from the being who has hitherto been the engrossing object of my thoughts and actions. Besides, the fact is, we cannot make up our minds to part, without the sincerest regret, from one for whom we feel so much esteem—such a true regard."

Tears were again filling my eyes, and I pressed the hand of the kind lady in silent gratitude.

"Will you then, Mademoiselle," she proceeded to say, "will you continue to live with us, as my friend and companion, until you are claimed by Sybil? For you know what you have promised her," she said, with a smile, "that if ever there be a little Sybil Lennard, to your care you will take her. In the years of rest, which must necessarily intervene before

your services can be required, you will gain fresh strength for this second undertaking; and may you prove as successful, with a child of my child's, as you have been with the mother."

I could not forbear a smile at this premature provision. It was, however, quite in character with Mrs. Devereux. She always laid her plans; and hitherto, it had appeared, as if she only had to plan, and success followed closely upon her wishes.

And so there is often a tide in a life—a current of prosperity, which flows on for awhile without a single check or hindrance; and like many, thus favored by a long course of prosperity, Mrs. Devereux, was, perhaps, tempted to consider that she had still much, "goods laid up for many years," forgetful that the storm might suddenly arise, and in one fell swoop, utterly scatter and destroy them.

I must not detain my readers any longer on a theme so uninteresting, as any details connected with the history of an individual so insignificant as myself—the humble governess! Suffice it to say, that I gratefully accepted the offer of Mr. and Mrs. Devereux. The comfort and happiness I derived under their roof, and the pleasure with which I anticipated the labor of love, promised to me at some future period, made me not scruple to reject an offer of a different kind—a proposal of marriage—my first and only chance of matrimony, from a curate of Mr. Melville's who came to reside in the village a short time after the period of which I have been speaking.

So much for the poor Felicie, who, eight years before, had timidly entered upon her new career—*eight years*, the first stage, beyond mere babyhood of her, whose biographer I have become—eight years, which had transformed the joyous innocent child of the hay-field, into the queen-like creature I had last beheld as a bride—a wife!—but still as joyous, as beautiful, I might almost say as innocent as ever.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

### PART SECOND.

Oh, Love! in such a wilderness as this,  
Where transport and security entwine,  
Here is the empire of thy perfect bliss,  
And here thou art a God, indeed divine.

Roll on ye days of raptured influence shine!  
Nor bind with century's celestial fire,  
Shall love behold the spark of earth-born fire expire?  
CAMPBELL.

It was towards the close of August, that the marriage of Albert and Sybil, had taken place. Their wedding excursion was of short duration; the happy bridegroom being desirous that his bride should, for the first time, behold her future home, radiant in the glorious autumnal beauty, so calculated to display to perfection, a place like Llewellyn Castle, situated in the most beautiful part of Cardiganshire.

The estate extended for many miles round a

mansion of princely magnificence. Picturesque in the extreme was the surrounding scenery. There was the deep and narrow valley, winding between mountains of towering height and fantastic shapes, thickly mantled with luxuriant woods, which fringed the precipitous sides of these enormous projections, from their summits to their base. Through this valley, an impetuous foaming river threw its crystalline waters, sometimes darting from an open rocky ledge, into a dark and deep abyss below; at others, pouring through the gloomy recesses of an impenetrable wood. On a gentle rise of land, which swelled gradually from the river, stood the noble mansion, encompassed by walks varied and extensive, commanding beautiful and romantic views; woods and rocks, bridges and cataracts, the highly ornamented garden, the rude, rugged, uncultivated mountain! The whole scene was, indeed, most striking; for the majesty of nature had not been frittered away by the paltry works of men's devices.

#### The negligently grand

The rolling stream—the precipice's gloom—  
The forest's growth—  
The wild rocks shaped as they  
Had turrets been  
A mockery of man's art!

And to Llewellyn we repaired to spend our Christmas; there to behold our Sybil in the new and responsible situation, into which she had so suddenly stepped.

Can I ever forget the countenance of Mrs. Devereux, as we approached this fair home of her child, which even stern winter could not rob of its charms and attractions! The mother's feelings of elated pride, mingled with the purer sensations of the mother's joy, at the prospect of beholding her daughter. Her heart was filled with love and tenderness, and then, as she looked around upon the worldly advantages possessed by this cherished object, a feeling of self-importance, mingled with the emotions of her heart.

"All this belongs to my daughter!" seemed to be the words hovering on her lips.

The demeanor of the father, on the contrary, was calm and dignified composure, though his cheek was rather pale, and his eyes glistened with inward agitation.

Albert and Sybil, were at the door to receive us—two creatures how perfectly in character, with all that surrounded them—how well-suited to be the inhabitants of such a paradise! It was strange but beautiful to see, with what easy dignified grace, the young recluse, had glided into her place, as a mistress of a household, and a wife! whilst, at the same time, the natural simplicity of girlhood remained untouched. Mrs. Devereux, as she gazed at her child with proud exultation, still seemed to say,

"Behold my work!"

And I—had I no whisperings of vanity—of self-complacency!

It would take long to describe minutely the increased delight which each day of our stay at Llewellyn Castle brought with it. My readers will imagine what it must have been to Mrs



Devereux, whose one great aim for the last seventeen years, had been the marriage of her child with Albert Lennard. And indeed, it was perfect joy to us all, to see the two beings we loved best on earth, in the enjoyment of such perfect felicity; felicity too, likely, in all human probability, to augment rather than decrease with time.

Before we returned to Oakleigh, some festivities were held, at which the youthful pair first made themselves acquainted with the tenants and surrounding peasantry; winning all hearts by their benignant and courteous demeanor. A small party—over which our sweet Sybil presided—also assembled at the Castle for a few weeks, consisting, however, of only a few near neighbors—one or two of Albert's college friends—Sir William and Lady Mordaunt, and the Miss Mordaunts, who at the request of their sister-in-law, had been invited to accompany them, it being their own earnest desire to be included, as Lady Mordaunt afterwards informed me.

Albert had never before seen these young ladies; and the only shade of anything approaching to dissatisfaction respecting Sybil, was caused by their presence. Though she still stood in the light of one younger and more beautiful, by her marriage, she was lifted far above the feelings of jealousy which had formerly been excited in the minds of the Miss Mordaunts at Brighton; indeed—as Mrs. Lennard, with a splendid country house, in which, from the fortune and position of her husband, the best and most profitable kind of society might be expected to congregate—the timid girl they had once deemed it a condescension to patronize, was transformed into a deity, to whom they offered the full meed of their worship and devotion; and Sybil, flattered and pleased with adulation so new to her, and from those, who, to her unsophisticated perception, seemed models of amiability and agreeability, during their stay was more fascinated and influenced by the glitter of their society, than Albert—quite approved. Her musical merriment called forth by the diverting powers of those young ladies, I could almost fancy jarred upon his ears. Sybil, quick in marking his every look and tone, as in their former characters of brother and sister, she had ever been, was not long in discovering the sentiments of her husband; and, although evidently impressed by his gentle confession of not liking to see “his Sybil” easily allured into new and sudden friendships she rallied him archly one day, after the departure of the company, on his jealousy as she playfully chose to term it—a failing to which she feared he was addicted. Never should she forget, she laughingly added, his envy that time, long ago, when he returned home, and found that another than the great Mogul, Albert, had in his absence, been admitted amongst her list of acquaintances—even had been allowed the privilege of taking her picture!

“By-the-bye,” she continued, in the same bantering tone, “you were talking of having my likeness taken again; do, dear Albert, advertise for Hardress Fitz Hugh, to come and

perform that office once more; he must now be a first-rate artist.”

Albert smiled; perhaps at the remembrance of his boyish weakness, on the subject of Hardress Fitz Hugh.

“The Miss Mordaunts need not be invited again,” interposed Mrs. Devereux, evidently mortified and annoyed, that after all her care, her daughter should have been guilty of the display of any sentiment, calculated to draw forth a shade of dissatisfaction from her idolized son-in-law; “Sybil will, I am sure, only require a hint, that you consider an individual objectionable, to make her eschew the acquaintance forever. As yet, she is inexperienced in her perception of characters, but—”

“Oh! come, we are getting rather hard upon the poor Miss Mordaunts,” interrupted Albert, good naturedly, and anxious to save Sybil from a long spun lecture, from her worthy mother, which he had had no intention to entail upon her. “Objectionable my dear Mrs. Devereux, is rather a severe term to apply to these young ladies. The fact is, I am spoilt,” he continued, in a tone of deep and earnest affection, as he fondly passed his arm around his young wife's waist; “with this model before my eyes, such as my imagination has ever formed for itself, I am not prepared to be captivated with that species of young ladies the Miss Mordaunts represent—mere lively, agreeable flirts! But,” added Albert, laughingly, “I believe there is no necessity to be under any alarm that they will often desire to be our guests, for I do not imagine that we can suit them very well. They have seen a sample of the style of company they may expect to meet here, and from what I could judge by their conversation, it cannot answer their idea of *good society*. I do not think they will consider it worth their while to cultivate us greatly.”

“Not good society, Albert! what can they then term good?” exclaimed Sybil, with surprise, whilst Mrs. Devereux bridled up with offended dignity, at such an insult upon a community formed by herself and her compeers.

“You must remember,” pursued Albert, “that the Mordaunts, are London young ladies, Sybil; therefore, a London set of people are more in their line, than those they met here—relations, old and valued friends, and country neighbors; with whom I consider it especially my duty to exchange civilities; and to this circle it is my desire chiefly to limit the society of my country house.”

“You are right, Albert,” said Mr. Devereux, delighted with sentiments according so well with his own—“I hope you will persevere in this determination, for we do indeed require, in the present generation, some such examples to preserve the race of English gentlemen ‘all of the olden time’ from utter extinction; those who are content in the bosom of their family and in the rational society of estimable friends to pass the time undevoted to public duty; relieving poverty—encouraging industry—diffusing comfort and happiness around; thus affording a noble exemplification of that active benevolence which, if it always accompanied the power of doing good, would be found the surest; nar-

dian of extensive possessions, as well as the greatest blessing those enjoyments can bestow. The fox-hunting squires of days gone by, were certainly a libel on the race, but I hardly know whether they may not be deemed preferable to many rich landowners of our times, whose chief aim seems to be, to fritter away amongst—what they call, good London society, their time and substance in what is called the season; and, during the remainder of the year, use their house as a receptacle for stray grandees and idle fashionables, on whom they expend their hospitality to the exclusion often of old friends and near relatives, from whom nothing is to be gained in return, and who, being birds of a different feather, would probably be looked down upon with contempt by the rest—”

“And the wives and daughters,” interposed Mrs. Devereux, “what ruination to them must be this state of things! Albert, when you are in Parliament, as in all likelihood you will be next year, I trust you will not expose your wife to that deteriorating atmosphere, from which the most carefully nurtured mind can scarcely preserve, untainted, its original spotless purity.”

Mr. Devereux, did not agree with his lady on this point. On the contrary, he thought it said but little for the right-mindedness of that woman, who could not pass unscathed through the ordeal of even dissipated society; though it was far from his wish to recommend the pursuance of such a mode of existence.

Albert told Mrs. Devereux, he hoped that for many years to come, Sybil and himself would find the society of one another sufficient to preclude the necessity of roaming elsewhere in search of further happiness; and, in contemplating his Parliamentary prospects, they had already meditated on his occasional hasty trips to town—his returns from such expeditions, after his brief absences, only enhancing their mutual enjoyment; in short, they fully intended, as far as possible, to personify that blest character described by the poet in the following lines:—

“Happy the man who to those shades retires  
Whom Nature charms, and whom the Muse inspires;  
Whom humbler joys of homefelt quiet please,  
Successive study, exercise, and ease.”

Then in answer to the waving of Sybil's hand, the young husband sprang from the window with graceful alacrity, and in a few moments was by her side, his arm encircling her slender waist, as they gazed down into the crystalline waters of the river, which, fiercely and impetuously foaming, environed them with its spray, glittering like silvery drops in the sunshine of that bright February morning.

Mr. Devereux remarked, that if his presentiments proved true, his son-in-law would one day find his talents somewhat interfere with the schemes of rural felicity he had formed. Such a gem would never be suffered, by those who discovered its value, to shine in secret, even if youthful ambition did not draw him forth. But the mind of Mrs. Devereux, was set perfectly at ease, at least for the present, and henceforth could give itself up to the new and pleasing occupation now afforded by the maternal prospects of her daughter. And what with con-

stantly watching her every movement—the frequent lectures she administered to the young mother expectant, while under her eye, followed up during their separations by letters of injunctions and category, added to the numerous important arrangements which engaged her time for several months, she was kept fully employed and amused, until she again repaired to Llewellyn Castle, in order to preside at the birth of a grandchild, with the comfortable feeling of self-importance, which ever exercised its dominion over the good lady, that the success of the whole affair, both as regarded the mother and child, would be entirely owing to her individual skill, and careful exertions on the important occasion.

## CHAPTER XIX.

—“No tongue can tell what bliss o'er flowed  
The mother's tender heart, while round her hung  
The offspring of her love.  
As living jewels dropt unstained from heaven,  
That made her fairer far, and sweeter seem,  
Than every ornament of costlier hue.” LLOYD.

THERE was certainly one little deviation from the preconceived plan of Mrs. Devereux. She had fully intended that the expected infant should be a son and heir, and lo! in his stead, a little girl was placed in her arms; the first and last act of presumption, of which that sweet being was ever known to be guilty. But then, as the excellent lady herself sagely remarked, as if in extenuation of having been at fault in this instance—this was a point on which it was *most* likely to err—certainly one a little above human prescience! and then she composedly superintended the alteration of the baby's caps, and offered me her congratulations, on the prospect of my promised Sybil, being in readiness for my services—for the exercise of my educational talents, a year or two earlier than she would otherwise have been.

But here, again, she was somewhat mistaken.

The little being, now under discussion, did not prove the *Sybil*, but the *Mary*, of whom the reader, in future pages, will hear more—the worthy possessor of, not only the sweetest, but the holiest name ever given to woman—“the name endeared to every christian, from the relation it bears to our Redeemer's history,—the name long consecrated, as having been the first which was pronounced by Jesus after the resurrection.”

Right glad would Sybil have been to have passed over the next year, as rapidly as I shall convey my readers, again to preside over the birth of a second daughter—the long planned Sybil of Mrs. Devereux—a beautiful dark-eyed babe, the image of the mother, and a complete contrast of the fair little Mary. A year after, the cup of happiness of the young couple seemed filled to the very brim, for an heir was born to them.

This event caused universal joy, and the hills and valleys echoed with the music of the bells of the neighboring villages, and the festive sounds of rejoicing from the grateful tenants and peasantry.



## CHAPTER XX.

A sinful soul possessed of many gifts,  
A spacious garden full of flowering weeds,  
A glorious devil, large in heart and brain.

TENNYSON.

HAVING thus in a cursory manner sketched the outline (formed by the birth of their children) of the first four or five years of Albert and Sybil's union, there is much in the coloring of that period, which must not be neglected.

The prognostics of Mr. Devereux, as to his son-in-law proving too shining a light to realise the lover husband's romantic vision of "The world forgetting, by the world forgot," were fully verified.

Albert did not "unbecome the promise of his spring." Solicited to stand for the county, he was elected by a large majority. His maiden speech, the following session on some important measure, produced an effect most auspicious to his future prospects as a parliamentary orator, for it displayed not only a strength of vigor and intellect extraordinary for one so young, but also gave evidence of a heart replete with sentiments of benevolence and pure morality, which drew upon him irresistibly, not merely the enthusiastic admiration, but the respect and esteem of those who listened to it.

Soon this youthful Aristides found himself courted by the great—the truly great! Learned men—able statesmen, all held out the hand of fellowship, to the rising young man, whose talents and principles gave promise of so much usefulness; and Albert found these new associates truly accordant with his tastes.

And honor and esteem were not alone bestowed on Albert individually. It is well said by an old writer that, "a wife should be a mirror to reflect the disposition of her husband," and so it was with Albert's wife at this period, as all who knew her may bear witness. Alike beautiful did her character shine as a wife, mother, and hostess. In accordance with the earnest wishes of Mrs. Devereux, which, indeed, in this instance, completely harmonized with her own inclinations and those of Albert, she only occasionally accompanied her husband to town. She felt no desire to exchange for any new and untried pleasures, those dear and increasing delights in which she revelled in her beautiful home; and during her temporary visits to London, Albert's time was so fully occupied by his necessary avocations, and she so entirely acted up to another quaint maxim of conjugal excellence of "never going abroad but in her husband's company," that she had not mixed in any society, save the select few whom Albert, in his leisure hours, drew around him; to whose eyes the lovely and accomplished being they then beheld, pure from the contamination of vice or vanity in the midst of the ensnaring world, appeared in the light of some fair planet which, elevated above the other constellations, diffused her mild lustre upon her husband's path alone, adding to its brilliancy with her silvery radiance. But as time flew on, and the increasing ties and duties of a mother rendered such a plan of proceeding not only less feasible, but less desirable—

when, too, Albert's parliamentary career became more engrossing, entailing upon him long and frequent absences from his family, it became then obvious that a change must be made; and some time before the design was carried into execution, the young member announced his intention of purchasing a house in London for the residence of his family during the sessions.

With what strange coincidences are events often linked together! The same day that gained for Albert the honors which finally induced him to fulfil this project—the day, I mean, on which he obtained the honorable official appointment, which rendered obligatory that step which in its end proved of such deep moment—that very day gives me the opportunity of once more introducing to my readers an individual, who has already been brought before their notice—one so closely interwoven with the events which sprang from that very step.

Albert Lennard, the tory member for the county of Cardiganshire, stood up to address the house. Graceful in manner, easy in utterance, his voice clear and melodious, his sentiments benevolent, his style placid and dignified, he seemed at first more likely to draw converts than to force conviction; but, like the flowing of a mighty river, which calmly, but irresistibly pursues its course, sweeping away every impediment which art can raise, or impurity generate—so he, in language the most convincing and overwhelming, continued to pour forth his opinions, producing a powerful and marvellous influence on the minds of his hearers.

He resumed his seat amidst murmurs of applause more deep than loud, and ere these had subsided, there arose from the opposition benches a member, whose appearance afforded a contrast which must have struck most forcibly every eye.

The young man who now came forward was of an uncommon height, but instead of the erect, noble carriage, which so peculiarly characterized the form of Albert, the figure of the individual now under observation, appeared slouching, stooping and ungainly.

He commenced speaking; his attitudes were ungraceful in the extreme—his delivery hesitating—his whole manner constrained.

"Who is that?" whispered Lennard to his neighbor, as the tone of the voice struck familiarly on his ear.

"Heaven knows!" was the answer, with a shrug of the shoulders from the person addressed. "Some wild man of the people probably, who would be more at his ease haranguing an Irish mob, I imagine, than when addressing his Majesty's Commons."

But Albert's attention was again turned upon the speaker, and cries of "hear, hear," were now rising, in lieu of the suppressed groans which had greeted his commencement. Gradually warming with the subject, his gesticulations became animated, his eloquence impetuous, his style altogether most powerful and overwhelming. His countenance lighted up with fire—his keen, black eyes flashed from be-

neath his marked eye-brows, and he swept all before him like a pent up torrent, after it has broken the bounds which restrained its onward courses.

Now in strains of the most cutting irony—now in sallies of Irish wit and humor—which, added to the drollery of voice and gesture he assumed, provoked roars of laughter—now again in splendid bursts of Demosthenes' oratory, which produced an almost miraculous effect! Plaudits long and loud succeeded from his supporters, and from those who advocated the very *liberal* sentiments which his speech conveyed.

The orator had created too great a sensation for his name to have remained for any length of time unknown; and Albert would soon have learnt it, even had he not, on a further glance, been convinced of his identity, that it was Hardress Fitz Hugh who stood before him, the nephew of Lord Castlerosse, who that day, for the first time, had taken his seat in Parliament, as the radical representative of the county of \_\_\_\_\_, in Ireland.

The readers made familiar with the character of the young Tory member, will have no difficulty in following him in imagination, into the society, in which, as a finished gentleman, as well as a talented and high-minded man, it is most natural he should mix. To the virtuous home where all holy blessings and sacred ties joyfully await his return, they shall soon accompany him, but I must delay that pleasing sketch until I have fulfilled my duty, as a faithful narrator, and tracked the steps of another character—namely, our old acquaintance Hardress Fitz Hugh, on quitting the scene of action, in which he had shone forth as conspicuously—and to those who witnessed his debut, as unexpectedly, as the sparkle of a diamond unwittingly brought to light by the chance stroke of a lapidary on some rough, unpromising stone.

Would that we could find his light, sparkling with a lustre, as pure as it was dazzling!

I will not—being neither capable nor desirous of the undertaking—attempt to give a full coloring to the picture of contrast afforded by Hardress Fitz Hugh, and his rival star of that any, by describing, as might be done, by an abler hand in such matters, the style of friends and partizans amongst which they separately made a triumphant retreat from the House that day, or to decide on the merits of the cause they had defended and advocated; nor do I now wish to follow Hardress Fitz Hugh into his social haunts. It is more with the private characteristics of the man that this narrative is connected, and into them an insight may best be given, by a glance at his home—that is to say, his London domicile at the present time.

With perhaps as much astonishment as the inmates of Oakleigh Court in former days, beheld the uncouth, uncivilized Irish youth develop himself into the talented embryo genius, or with equal amazement to the wonder with which his Majesty's Commons listened that day to the rich strain of eloquent oratory, hitherto unrivalled, from the lips of the ungainly Irish democrat, would the beholder have been filled on intrud-

ing himself into the abode of Hardress Fitz Hugh.

Let us now imagine him entering an apartment, whose very atmosphere seemed to breathe of Genius, Beauty, and Love, in its most refined character; Genius and Beauty displayed in those choice specimens of that most wonderful gift, nature has bestowed on man—Painting and Sculpture.

And where was the third attribute—the *Love* of which I spake? Was Hardress a second Pygmalion, able to breathe into the pictured or sculptured forms, his hand had created, the life of that passion, without which Genius and Beauty themselves are cold and worthless to the human heart! To look upon the man as there he stood, appearing to the visible eye, a strange anomaly to the character of all around him, it might have been questioned, whether aught, save some supernatural power, could have enabled him to excite love in any breast. Some unknown power then he did possess; for never did the incense of that feeling rise with a more ardent, and spontaneous flame, than that which encircled Hardress Fitz Hugh—emanating from the heart of the being whose presence gave to the beauty of that apartment, the life of Love.

"Norah!" exclaimed Hardress, after standing for a moment at the door, a sudden flash of animation illumining his countenance, his eye fixed on one spot of that apartment, "At your peril move not! Stir not for your life!"

And the form of her to whom this singular greeting was addressed, moved not—stirred not, save with those inward emotions, which the will of man has no power to control.

The bosom, which before only heaved at intervals, with a gentle sigh, now rose quick and high; the eyes, before so fixed and passionless, turned eagerly upon the speaker, lighted up with an expression, in which the spirit of love, in its utmost power, was fully personified, and hurrying to a seat placed before an easel, on which a canvass was stretched, bearing on its surface the first outline of a picture, the orator, just returned from the House in the full flash of excitement and triumph under the tumultuous escort of a party of fiery, democratic allies, applied himself to his brush and pallet, with the enthusiastic and absorbing energy of a second Reubens, or Guido.

But in order that the readers may have before their eyes a clearer idea of the subject, which had thus suddenly and keenly attracted the magnetic power of his genius, I must be more explicit.

The object on which the glance of Hardress Fitz Hugh, had rested, on the first entrance, was the figure of a woman kneeling on the ground, as motionless as many of the pictured forms around it—as beautiful in its outline. The face was bent towards the ground, and was partly concealed by the long hair which streamed over her person in tresses of that peculiar pale Auburn so rarely seen, but which man's imagination confers on our first parent Eve, and which Guido has chosen in his famous painting of the Magdalene.

And in the attitude—the whole aspect of the form we are describing, could there have been



found a more fitting model for an artist, desiring to embody a similar conception? And it was in the character of that fair penitent of old that Hardress was depicting the being before him.

This was, however, no sudden thought of the moment. The painting had been long designed—long begun; but his ambitious genius, bent on its proving a work of perfection, rivalling, if possible, that of the great Italian master, had been so fastidious, that again and again he had abandoned his labors in a fit of angry impatience. It was, therefore, in obedience to his commands, that Norah Mahony, the lovely but unhappy creature he had addressed by that name, had been engaged during his absence in studying according to his directions, the attitudes and positions requisite for his purpose.

With this intent she had unbound her luxuriant hair, and with an anxious zeal, which spoke more of love than mere obedience, strove to infuse into her aspect and posture, those characteristics which the artist had described as most favorable to his ideal conception of the subject he wished in her to represent—that moment, when the convicted sinner, having heard from the gracious lips of the holy Judge, words of merciful forbearance, and the gentle but solemn admonition, to “Go, and sin no more,” in lieu of the awful condemnation she had expected, stands no longer “in the midst,” but sinks at His feet, smitten, indeed, to the very earth with sorrow and shame, but even still more overpowered by wondering love, gratitude, and hope.

Miserable, mocking task! to be undertaken by the wretched Norah, for the sake of him who had perverted her mind, stifled the warnings of her conscience, and turned her so far out of the right path into the ways of sin, and the bonds of iniquity, that he could set her to act and study and dwell upon the touching story of her more blest prototype, in impious confidence, that it would awaken in the heart of the wretched girl no desire, like her she personated, to “arise and sin no more.”

But the young girl had indeed brought the task to perfection, if no spark of nature was in the attitude in which Fitz Hugh had surprised her, or in the countenance pale as if from intensity of startled thought, which she had at first turned towards him. Alas! *had* there been any feeling approaching in reality to the character he wished the unfortunate Norah for a brief space to personify, his presence soon dispersed the charm; and when Hardress—having executed with masterly facility, those touches necessary to give the peculiar position of the figure, raised his eyes hastily to the face, impatient to catch that expression which he had never before beheld on it, the contrast it now afforded, glowing with attributes so discordant, with those he wished to pourtray, startled him into a loud roar of laughter, and throwing down his pencils, and putting aside the easel, with a gesture of drollery, he exclaimed:

“Faith! my Norah Creina, is that a countenance for a penitent Magdene! Ah! but you’re a sinner yet, every bit of you my girl! so get up, I’ve done with you!”

She obeyed with joyful alacrity; smiling,

and throwing back, with both her hands, her flowing tresses from about her face, she flew into the arms now opened to receive her.

(This last sketch the editor took the liberty of inserting, when the manuscript was placed in his hands for publication, by the good lady to whom the world is indebted for the auto-biographical part of these pages; and the public must be pleased to bear in mind, that many parts of the narrative will be supplied by him, which will account for the introduction of passages, bearing an incongruity with the usual style of the writing.)

The following is the outline of the career of Hardress Fitz Hugh, from the time we lost sight of him, to that which again brings him before our notice.

We heard of his having been removed from the peaceful domicile of Mr. Melville—for which he had become so unfit an inmate—to Cambridge, where he equally distinguished himself for brilliant scholarship and dissolute behavior. To such an extent, indeed, did he carry his profligate course, that at last it became too glaring to be overlooked, and a hint was considerably conveyed to Lord Castlerosse, that it would be as well to advise his nephew to withdraw from the university—at least for a time—the high authorities, out of regard for his great and promising talents, being unwilling to resort to more decided measures.

These great and promising talents, too, alone prevented the morbidly indolent Lord from washing his hands forever of a nephew, who had thus for the second time entailed upon him the trouble and annoyance of having his quiet broken in upon by a disagreeable correspondence. This clause moved the uncle not only to look with more indulgence on those less gratifying points of his nephew’s composition—not now for the first time forced upon his notice—and to reflect that his failings could not be much worse than his own had once been, but it even aroused him to the exertion of ringing for Dennis, the steward, who had been the original means of opening his eyes to the germs of genius in Hardress’s nature.

Having confided to the old domestic, the present state of affairs, with regard to the hopeful scion of his house, Lord Castlerosse, ordered that pecuniary arrangements should be made—without troubling him further about it, for discharging the different debts, which the young man had incurred, and also to enable him in obedience to his peremptory commands, to repair to the continent for an exile of two years; during which period his lordship insisted, on pain of total disinheritance, that he might not be annoyed by his graceless nephew. The steward promised to execute his commands, and being as we have before seen, a man somewhat superior in mind, he ventured to suggest that if the comparative subordination of a university had proved no check upon the propensities of his young master, he would find none in the wide range and enervating soil of the continent.

"At any rate, I shall be saved the annoyance of having accounts of the vices of this troublesome youth, thrust continually before my eyes," was the reply of the affectionate relative. "But if this full-grown man of twenty-one, still requires some one at his heels, to whip him into decent behavior, (good luck to him who undertakes the office) in Heaven's name find some one to be the bear-leader, without tormenting me any more upon the subject—endeavor to procure a travelling Mentor proper for the purpose."

Thus it was again Dennis's task to execute this momentous commission of finding a guide and monitor for Hardress Fitz Hugh; and as the eagle, has the power of snuffing the scent of carrion, so did the individual, who had been his former selection—the man Desmond—hurry forward with eager assiduity to offer his services on the occasion; being, as he said, on the point of leaving Ireland, to travel in foreign parts, and on the look out for exactly such a situation, as the one in question appeared to be.

Dennis looked somewhat shyly on this proposition, retaining no very favorable remembrance of the manner in which this person had fulfilled his duties as a preceptor, nor of the example, he had afforded his pupil. He recollected also having seen of late, in the newspapers which found their way into the steward's room, the name of this man mentioned, as taking a conspicuous part in affairs somewhat at variance with the qualifications requisite to form a suitable companion for a wild youth. But Desmond had a powerful and influential ally ready to favor his cause—one whom Dennis had neither courage nor inclination to resist; for the good steward was a devoted Roman Catholic, and the patron of Desmond, was his priest, who, of course, held his mind, soul, and judgment in strict obedience. So Desmond crossed the channel, empowered with credentials which were to certify to the offending collegian, that he was the escort for his continental travels, provided and sanctioned by his uncle.

We need not pause to detail the mutual delight with which the former tutor and pupil again met and renewed their acquaintance, nor the strict fellowship which immediately sprung up between them.

Desmond found his ex-scholar had become even more enlightened on many points than himself, more calculated to form a partizan and leader in certain machinations, in the organization of which Hardress, indeed, soon became the principal actor, instead of the tool his *ci devant* tutor had designed to make him. Young Fitz Hugh, truly found a wide range for kindling into full perfection, every fiery power of his mind and soul. France, Jacobinical and immoral, proved the hot bed of principles and opinions which already were springing up too luxuriantly in his nature—Germany, metaphysical, and sophistical, the disperser of every substance—of even an erring religion, into the noxious dust of Socialism and Deism—Italy the forcing-house of every voluptuous, ardent and enervating passion. Still there mingled with all these evil propensities one attribute which was of a very different description—for genius

was his—that gift divine, which preserves the indication, and retains the voice of Heaven within us, however man may pervert it:

"A beam ethereal, sullied and absorbed,  
Tho' sullied and dishonored, still divine."

In Italy how he revelled and fed on the glorious elements of nature and of art—how congenial was all around to the taste and talents of this most extraordinary youth! There it was, and also in Germany, that the talent of which he had given such precocious signs, was perfected in its singular and original excellence. And thus a strange mixture of man, demon, and angel, he returned to his country, after a three years' absence, in the company of Desmond. During that period no personal communication had been carried on between the uncle and nephew, but liberal pecuniary means had been afforded Fitz Hugh; so liberal, indeed, that without much self-denial he had been enabled to refrain from abusing this munificence, by exceeding the remittances. Therefore with more assurance did Hardress, on landing in Ireland, direct his course to the Castle rackrent of his noble relative, awake him from his three years' sleep of "dumb forgetfulness," and claim for himself a welcome, as a dutiful and obedient nephew, who had even outstaid his term of probation, and now returned, penitent and reformed.

Although, at first, Lord Castlerosse gave him such a reception, as a sluggard usually bestows upon one who takes upon himself the thankless office of arousing him—that is he showed very plainly, if he did not express it in words, that he wished Hardress at Jericho or any other far off region of the world; still that youth wormed himself not only into the mansion of his uncle, as a tolerated inmate, but as a favored member of his family; for instead of the wild roué, with a riotous crew at his heels, to turn his "Castle of Indolence," into a scene of uproar and discomfort, the Earl was electrified into animated surprise, by beholding in the nephew—whose awkward appearance had not at first sight, gainsayed his expectations—a being who gradually unfolded himself into a spirit of genius and talent; both by the tone of his conversation, and the surprising specimens, he displayed before the astonished eyes of Lord Castlerosse, of his proficiency in an art, of which, in his own waking days, the Peer had been somewhat of a connoisseur and dilettante. And when the amateur artist, ventured to express, how grateful he would be, for some corner of the house, in which he might be allowed to pursue his studies for some time, in the strict retirement of his uncle's abode, he was given a *carte blanche* to appropriate any part of the mansion for his own use, and was even permitted the following day, to commence painting the Peer in his library—the indolent man really enjoying the operation, which obliged him to remain passive for an hour or two in his arm chair, whilst he listened without the exertion of more than occasional monosyllabic replies, to the rich and amusing flow of eloquent talk, which Hardress poured forth in order to beguile the tedium of the sitting.



And a graphic picture that was considered by those who saw it, and one which by its description is brought distinctly before the mind's eye. A dingy apartment was truly this den of the Irish Lord—one which, after all they have heard of his love of ease and comfort, would have somewhat surprised those of my English readers, who are not personally acquainted with the comparative uncivilization of the abodes of even the great in the sister kingdom, whose absentee owners seldom consider it worth while to expend much trouble or money on their improvement or embellishment—at least, so it was some thirty years ago. The furniture of this apartment was old fashioned, and gothic in the extreme, as well as scanty and dilapidated. Of the books indeed, which gave the room its title, there was a plentiful share, but these, though very seldom disturbed, had the same untidy, ill-arranged air, pervading all around, and which, blackened both by time and the atmosphere of the peat fire which smouldered in the ample grate, added as little to the enlightenment of the chamber itself, as to the intellects of its occupants.

Now in this picture, Hardress gave to all that I have endeavored to describe, its darkest, gloomiest hue, concentrating with the skill of a Rembrandt the whole light, and throwing it—as if reflected from the huge peat fire near which he sat—on the figure of his uncle. And that same figure, with what characteristic fidelity was it portrayed! The tall, indolently reclining form, reposing in his large, but ill fashioned easy chair, clad in a dressing gown of scarcely a more modern appearance—

“Ungartered hose, and slippers down at heel,”

and hair, if not beard, certainly,

“Unconscious of the biting steel—”

the listless attitude, the happy, satisfied expression of perfect apathy, as there he rested, with lack lustre eyes turned upwards to the ceiling, as if he were communing with the spirits of slumber about to descend gently upon his senses, all were there to the very life, without bordering on the caricature.

But the transient gleam of animation caused by his nephew's arrival, having soon died away, little more trouble or care did Lord Castlerosse give himself concerning him than he had done years ago; but this arrangement was perfectly satisfactory to that nephew.

Having once established himself in a distant suite of apartments, they became the scene of a more extended character, than the quiet labors of the brush. They were soon the resort of friends and associates, introduced by Desmond to the levies of his former pupil, and now influential and tolerated patron.

And here—but more especially at political meetings, held in different parts of the neighboring county, for Hardress by no means acted the part of a second recluse of the Castle, did he exercise the oratorical powers he so greatly possessed, and which soon rendered him the popular idol of those misguided, excited, rebellious beings, whose spirits he helped to influence.

It was about three years after his settling at

Castlerosse, that he was solicited to stand for the county, which, owing to his talents and position as the nephew of Lord Castlerosse, was a natural consequence; and therefore when he presented himself before his uncle to demand his support and concurrence, the Peer merely rubbed his eyes, started as if aroused again—but not so unpleasantly as when his nephew had last disturbed him from his three years slumber—asked him gruffly, what politics had to do with painting, but seemed altogether not displeased with the proposition; and finally gave him *corte blanche* at his banker's for the necessary expenses, then relapsed into torpor; never troubling himself even to inquire, what were the political opinions of the future representative of his family.

Perhaps indeed he had forgotten that there were two opinions in the world. He knew that he was monarch of all he surveyed—his arm-chair his throne, his poker his sceptre; and as long as to that sovereignty, none disputed his right, what signified to him, seditions, tumults, wars, or dissensions? Little did he dream in his torpid listlessness, that probably at that moment he owed this undisturbed reign—for the country was then in a very unquiet, excited state—to the fact of his mansion being the head-quarters of the chief inciter of the popular frenzy, and that same instigator, his own nephew! Little indeed did he divine what orgies went on beneath his own roof!

Old Dennis, however he might disapprove and mourn over these proceedings, was tongue-tied. Out of regard to his own personal safety, he was forced to be silent, for mysterious, startling threats had been conveyed to him anonymously; and moreover the circumstance of much that went on, being sanctioned by the countenance of O'Conner the priest, prevented his speaking out.

However, the election of his young master for a time emancipated him from any further responsibility. Hardress Fitz Hugh moved his quarters immediately to London, to commence his parliamentary duties, taking with him the unfortunate young being whom he had seduced from her home and duty—Norah Mahony; whose peculiar beauty had captivated his poetic fancy, and whose mind, originally pure and innocent, (for she was the child of respectable though poor parents) he had perverted from every right idea of good and evil, by the power of his wretched, misleading sophistry; and whose affections he had beguiled in all the warm intensity of her Irish nature, by that magical influence, which subtle genius, even from the time of the first serpent, has been ever known to obtain over the unguarded heart of woman.

Yes, the simple Norah Mahony, issuing from her lowly cottage door, with her face of innocent beauty, smiling from amongst her flowing yellow hair beneath the blue hooded cloak which encircled it—her naked, roseate, but still delicate feet, presented a picture which might well have drawn upon her, harmlessly, the pure eye of genius; but the perverted vision of Hardress Fitz Hugh fell upon her, and she was lost—

“He loved her, and destroyed her!”

## CHAPTER XXI.

Come to us, bright one—sunbeam of the heart.

There rests a shadow on our souls till then;

But come, and fresh flowers in our path will start,

And joyous greetings ring through grove and glen;

Come back and listen to affection's vow.

And the glad household welcome, "Here art thou."  
MISS JEWSSURY.

A bright, smiling picture was presented by an apartment at Llewellyn Castle, one evening about a week after the scenes I have been describing. My readers must imagine to themselves, a large, well lighted saloon, which all the luxuries of wealth, and refinement, contributed to embellish. But these were but as the golden frame, which I have too often since, beheld mockingly decorating many a picture of gloom, darkness, and distress. However, that which was then before my eyes, was one which would have been as lovely in itself, within no other setting than the walls of a cottage.

Sybil surrounded by her three most beautiful children! no unusual sight indeed—and one on which my eyes constantly feasted; yet that night the spectacle afforded a heightened glow of interest, which those will understand, who have been the observers of a family group, in expectation of the return of some beloved absentee; especially when that group is composed of beings too young in years, or too untouched by care, or sorrow, to anticipate such moments, with aught but unalloyed delight.

Alas! how seldom is there to be found, a circle in which there are not hearts whose very brightest moments are dimmed by some shade of anxiety and doubt—some retrospect, which throws its dark shadow, over the brilliancy of joy—speaking of absent forms and countenances which once beamed in affectionate sympathy with their emotion. In after life, the thoughts of death and bereavement will intrude—and painful yearnings after that delightful fellow feeling, which never again can be enjoyed.

But none of these sentiments were to be traced amongst the party assembled to greet the return of the successful member—the record of whose parliamentary triumphs I sat reading over again, for the fifth or sixth time; whilst tones of gladness and of glee sounded, and bright faces gleamed around me, all speaking of childhood's careless joy, and youthful woman's deeper, but equally ardent delight.

And then, occasionally, there would come a sudden hush, and every soft breath was suspended, whilst Sybil's cherub boy of three years old, in imitation of his mother's action, would place his tiny finger on his rose-bud lips; to still the movements of his sisters, when some sounds, apparently like those so anxiously awaited, attracted their attention.

And I can fancy now, I see him hasten with playful, mock terror, to turn and cling to the sanctuary of that mother's arms, which were so willing to receive and shield him from the depredating intentions of nurse—the former killjoy of Oakleigh Court, who now prowled about with murmurings on her lips, concerning, "this sad time of night, for Master Lennard to be out of his bed," to which was added the exclamation, intended to convey an overpowering re-

proach to her mistress, for her connivance, at this shocking breach of nursery etiquette—

"What would your grandmama say, I should like to know, sir?"

But that grandmama would have had her sense of propriety more scandalized, had she been witness of a proceeding of another member of the party, against this most respected personage—one which would truly, have caused the walls of Oakleigh Court to shake from their centre, with horror at the sacrilegious deed.

Vividly before my recollection is that scene—the little damsel of four years and a half—Sybil the younger, with her long graceful limbs, the moulded miniature of her mother's—her gait of the same stately bearing, leading the old lady through the door, and then with a determined air, closing it behind her, and returning with the triumphal air of a Joan of Arc, to receive the thanks of the community, for her spirited deliverance of them all, from this worthy torment.

And Mary, with her pale, golden hair, mingling with the locks of her little brother, as he hugged her in his little tight embrace—as if he would force the sympathy of his gentle sister, in his happy rescue, from the late impending danger—for he had probably discerned on her countenance, some little shade of doubt, as to the propriety of the bold deed of the brave little Sybil—their sweet lips pressed together, with all the energetic fervor of infantine affection. And my Sybil! what a radiant smile was that, which she vainly strove to subdue with a frown, as she turned from them, to greet the return of her heroic daughter! Again all was gladsome mirth, till a noise at last came, which was not deceitful, and a joyous rush from the room, left me alone, with glistening eyes.

Ah! me—those happy, blessed notes; a murmur—a confusion of young voices; such sweet greetings—rejoicings! To what can I compare those mingled sounds of love, and joy, and gladness, which thrilled to my heart, truly participating in their unalloyed delight!

"The blessed household voices;

I hear them still, unchang'd, though some from earth,

Are music parted, and the tones of mirth—

Will silvery tones, that rang through days more bright!

Have died in others!—"

Again the tread of coming feet echoes on my ear, and I see the tall figure of Albert Lennard, who holds in his arms his boy, who strokes with admiring fondness his father's face—that face, on which angels might have gazed with delight, irradiated as its beauty seemed to be, with happiness, springing from a source, as pure, as sacred, as any on earth—a husband's love, a father's joy! Sybil leant caressingly on one arm, his little daughters close following on his steps; all with eyes turned towards his countenance, as if eagerly striving to drink in a ray of its beaming light.

My turn now came for a share of that enjoyment, which I had hitherto only tasted by reflection, and I received the cordial greeting, due to an old friend and respected guest—for at that time, I was but on a visit to the Castle—and what a sunbeam was that greeting to my heart—would that I could feel it now!



The little people, having accompanied their father into the dining-room, where supper was prepared, were at length yielded to the charge of Nurse—

"To bed the children must depart  
A moment's heaviness they feel,  
A sadness at the heart.  
'Tis gone, and in a merry fit  
They run upstairs in gamesome race  
I, too, infected by their mood,  
I could have joined the wanton chase."

When the husband and wife joined me again in the saloon, where I sat long alone, but not lonely, sympathising as I did with them, in all the fancied delights of "the converse high" of the reunited ones, there was that chastened expression in their countenances, which told that more pressing matters than the careless joys of the present, had occupied them. Probably the moments past, and the careful future, had been under discussion; the latter comprising as it often does, the subject of plans, which, (however agreeable they may be,) seldom fail to press down, in some degree, the buoyant elasticity of the spirit.

They each took a seat by my side, for the evident kind purpose of making me feel myself one of them, and then Sybil exclaimed:

"Now, Mademoiselle, you must hear what Albert's new honors have drawn upon us; even his intention of exposing his wife and children to all manner of evils, as Mamma will say, by taking for them a house in the great Babel, and removing them from the safety of Paradise."

And then it was imparted to me, that very early in the spring, (it was now the beginning of August,) they were to adjourn to London, to remain stationary during the season, as Albert's appointment was one which would cause him for a time, to be much tied to the Metropolis.

Sybil, as she talked over this arrangement, became evidently excited by the prospect of a change, which would indeed form an era in the existence of the happy recluse of Llewellyn Castle; and, as I beheld her under an influence tending so much to heighten her beauty—which in its repose, might perhaps have been sometimes considered, too classically statue-like in its character, my foolish vain heart rejoiced, that Albert was about to show to the world, the matchless gem he possessed—the crown jewel of all the treasures with which he had been so bountifully gifted.

"But Albert, you must give Mademoiselle an account of Hardress Fitz Hugh's extraordinary *debut*," Sybil next exclaimed.

My interest was then deeply excited, by Albert's recital of the sudden re-appearance of our old acquaintance, and the sensation he had made in the House of Commons; and with delighted amusement, Sybil again listened to the detail given, for the second time, by her husband, for my benefit, in much the same manner as it has already been recorded to the reader, of his Radical opponent's brilliant oratorical success, which was magnanimously and truthfully dwelt upon by Albert.

At this success, I was not surprised; nor was Sybil, recollecting as she did, his early specimens of talent in that line, with which she had

been indulged; and she, especially, once again, recalled to my remembrance, the eloquence displayed in that never-to-be-forgotten relation of "Beauty and the Beast."

"How I should like the children to hear him tell the story! I often try, but never can make it so exquisitely interesting as he contrived to render it. But I suppose," she added archly to her husband, "it will be quite out of the question, for us red hot Tories, to breathe the same atmosphere with this shocking Radical."

Albert laughed; but did not give his lady any hopes of his progeny being allowed to benefit by the private exercise of the honorable member's eloquent oratory, and another subject was soon brought forward, in which I was most particularly concerned; for it treated of Sybil's desire, that I should now, without much further delay, enter upon the duties which would oblige me to be a regular inmate of their house. I was now, as I before stated, merely on a visit, having come to keep Sybil company, during her husband's absence; Mr. and Mrs. Devereux, being also away from their home on a little visiting excursion.

Sybil and I had been discussing this desired arrangement very seriously, since my arrival; for though Mary was only five years and a half old, therefore, full young to require a governess, Sybil descanted much—not only on the additional enjoyment to herself of having for a friend and companion, her dear Felicie, as she affectionately styled me—but on the means it would afford of lessening the domination of Mrs. Armstrong, the nurse, who strove hard to establish her power as firmly over the children under her care, as well as over the mind of the young mother, as nurses generally contrive to do. Fain would the old woman have pursued the same despotic course, which reigned over the nursery arrangements at Oakleigh Court; however, at Llewellyn, it was not so easy to accomplish her desires. The very atmosphere that pervaded that spot, was indulgence and liberty, gentleness, and peace, and a freedom from aught savoring in the slightest degree of oppression.

The only obstacle to our scheme, was Mrs. Devereux. Sybil had felt silent scruples at the idea of depriving her mother of her companion, ere she herself had made up her mind to do so. There would be also some difficulty in gaining that lady's approval of a step, contrary to her formed plan, which was, that till Mary had completed her ninth year, my services in her behalf, were not to be put into requisition.

At that age, "her daughter" had stepped from the nursery to school-room discipline—and what could be better, than strictly to follow every minutæ of that system which had been pursued in her case?

Still Sybil, and indeed, Albert—for they mutually agreed on the subject—now trusted that Mrs. Devereux would be inclined to look more favorably on the proposition; for though Mary might very well have continued—

"Till in her eyes, their ninth blue summer shone."

to range at large, free from school-room restraint, if like her mother, the country was to

be her home, yet in a London residence, this would be far from expedient, and they were sure, Mrs. Devereux would agree in this idea; indeed, Sybil laughingly declared, that she was not certain whether the good lady would not consider it prudent, to put her also under such awful guardianship, as the imposing presence of her dear Felicie.

I was rather curious to see, in what way Mrs. Devereux would bear the intelligence of the formerly so much dreaded change in her daughter's existence; but all turned out well on that point. Both the parents soon arrived at the Castle to spend a short time and take me home, and then the plan which had been formed in consequence of Albert's appointment, was imparted to them.

Mr. Devereux had long regarded it as a step which must eventually occur, and probably had prepared the mind of his lady for it; for she was certainly somewhat inflated with pride and glory at her son-in-law's success, and did not now appear very unwilling, that "her daughter" should be seen by the world as his wife. Besides, what could she now fear for that daughter! She beheld her flourishing like "a goodly cedar tree," in all the strength and beauty with which her culture, had caused it to abound—what now could shake its firm basis, or wither its beauty!

With regard to the scheme in which I was concerned, she received the suggestion, somewhat timidly hinted, with approbation and magnanimity.

Yes, it would decidedly be expedient, that owing to this unforeseen change of circumstances, my settlement in the family should be anticipated; this was an emergency which set matters on quite a different footing; and in the amusement, and occupation now afforded to the good lady, of discussing plans and arrangements, she became easily reconciled to this *bouleversement* of some of those theories, which had been so long established in her mind.

Perhaps it was chiefly out of gratitude to the real disinterested kindness of the motives which prompted Mrs. Devereux to coincide, without a murmur, on a point which interfered so materially with her own comfort, the premature relinquishment of a companion, to whom long acquaintance and custom, had attached her, that the parents on their part, consented to a request of hers, which was anything but agreeable to their feelings; namely, that the little Sybil might accompany us to Oakleigh Court. She had ever been the grandmother's favorite amongst the children, owing probably to the striking likeness she bore to her mother. The little creature, therefore, departed with us, to the delight of both her grand-parents and myself. I was curious to see Mrs. Devereux's management of a child of her tender age, when quite under her own control, and away from the domineering influence of Mrs. Armstrong. But if I had expected any Mrs. *Trimmerism* in her treatment, I was perfectly mistaken. Indeed, I was not a little amazed at all I saw, for her mode of proceeding was likely, if carried on, for any length of time, to prove the utter ruination of the character of her grandchild. It

was truly a strange sight to me, to watch Mrs. Devereux under the complete influence of this little child—subservient to all her wishes—blind to her every fault; viewing the younger Sybil with such different eyes, from those with which she had regarded her own child.

And such is often the case with grand-mothers, especially with those who have been long without young children of their own. They feel not the same responsibility towards another person's child; and probably, that is the cause of their generally giving way to the selfish gratification, of which, when their own offspring were in question, they deprived themselves, from a bounden sense of duty—the liberty of indulging a grandchild to the very utmost; and the little Sybil bid fair, I soon perceived, to be as much spoiled as her mother had been tutored. She was an engaging, spirited creature, and wound herself so completely round the hearts of Mr. and Mrs. Devereux, that the arrangement was finally made, which for many reasons, I have never ceased to regret—for I have oftentimes been tempted to attribute one of the drops of bitterness, mixed in our cup of sorrows in after days, to the step to which I now allude. I mean the request of the grand parents, and subsequent consent of Mr. and Mrs. Lennard, to their being allowed to retain the young Sybil for an indefinite period at Oakleigh Court.

Many plausible reasons were brought forward by Mrs. Devereux, to aid the cause. First of all, with regard to the child herself, the grandmother dwelt seriously on the extreme excitability of her temperament. It was very much, she said, what she had observed in her own Sybil, during her childhood; and what an injurious effect would it not have produced upon her, had she been taken to an exciting place like London, where she must have incurred the risk of being in constant intercourse with other children.

Then even her being in the house with a governess, was mentioned as an objection by Mrs. Devereux; for though she felt perfect confidence in my discretion and judgment in a general way, and gave me full credit for every right intention; "Nature," she said, "must be Nature still; and a governess could as soon refrain from teaching, as a dog from barking, or a cat from purring. And then, to her affectionate daughter and considerate son, was pathetically described, the sad loneliness which my loss would occasion Mrs. Devereux.

In short, for I must no longer dwell on such apparently trifling incidents, the point was gained, and little Sybil was left an inmate of Oakleigh Court, when early in the following February, I accompanied the Lennards to town, where, in a fine large house close to Hyde Park, we took up our abode.

## CHAPTER XXII.

THE Lennards did not plunge with avidity into all the gayeties of the season, though immediately after Sybil's presentation at court, all the best houses were thrown open, with *empré-*



ment not only to do honor to the young Statesman, but also to grace their rooms with the presence of his lovely wife, whose striking beauty had not failed to create a sensation in the circles of fashion, amongst which she now appeared for the first time.

Even had Albert desired any such general dissipation for himself and Sybil, he was too much engaged with his important avocations to be able to spare much time for its pursuits; therefore, the Opera, the houses of the Ministers, and those of a few connections and friends, formed at first the limits of their society. But even this restricted taste of the cup of pleasure seemed sufficient for Sybil, to judge by the excitement it occasioned to one so new to its delights. Surrounded by every circumstance—possessed of every attribute combining to render the draught enchanting—often even to the most sober-minded—no wonder was it, that her very freshness and inexperience in such enjoyments, seemed to make the present mode of life almost intoxicating to her senses. Albert would laughingly ask me, as he contemplated the sparkling, exhilarating mirth with which his young wife would return home on such nights of gaiety, whether it were not well, these outbreaks of dissipation were limited, and that Mrs. Devereux did not behold her daughter under the influence of the charm. Truly in such a case, the good lady might have thought that all her labor of years was frustrated, and that her pupil was infected by the contagion of dissipated manners.

But the husband experienced no uneasiness on the subject. He was delighted to witness his beautiful wife's enjoyment—proud to watch the admiration she attracted, and prouder still of the nature, of that admiration. For there was, in the description of her beauty, something so serenely chaste—so imperially distinguished, breathing through the very naïve and gracious affability of her deportment, towards those with whom she held intercourse, that as he once remarked to me, with a face of radiant satisfaction, she seemed like “some bright, particular star,” on which all might gaze admiringly, but ever with uplifted eyes, as on a statue of loveliness, to which there was no nearer approach; and this I truly believe was very much the sentiment inspired by the beauty of Mrs. Lennard, on its first becoming a mark for public criticism.

At the opera on one of the first nights of Sybil's attendance, as she sat in queen-like majesty, the aim for many an opera glass, her own glance perambulating, between the acts of the performance, over the brilliant circles, with what was, in reality, the absorbing interest of a novice, but which was interpreted by those who watched her as the inspecting gaze of a sovereign queen of beauty—many, doubtless, applied to her attractions something of the same character aptly given by a writer to the divine statue of the Venus at Florence, “a personification of all that is graceful, elegant, and beautiful, not only abstracted from all human infirmities, but elevated above all human feelings

and affections; in her eye no heaven, in her gesture no love.”

Perchance some who now beheld Mrs. Lennard for the first time, might have turned from her perfect beauty, and with greater pleasure, because with less of awe, have looked on some less fair dame, seemingly more tinctured with humanity; but there was one amongst this common herd of star gazers who had seen the lovely vision otherwise, who had witnessed those eyes illumined with the fire of light and life—to him indeed a heaven! had beheld that form floating before his sight in wild and ever varying movements. From every gesture of that perfect figure, he had once felt, too truly emanating, love ineffable; and though its recollection had since faded into a mere fair remembered dream of his fancy, again did it now flash upon his sight. Rapt, entranced, Hardress Fitz Hugh, gazed upon Sybil Lennard; for it was before his sight that suddenly had beamed forth, as the cynosure of every eye, “his morning star of memory,” and with so strange an effect did the suddenness of the apparition strike him, that—with his vision fixed as it were in a trance upon her face—it seemed that he was transported back in every feeling and circumstance over the many years that had elapsed, during which she had been lost to his sight, and that he again beheld, as in past days, the young girl, Sybil Devereux—the laughing Hebe, his genius had created—the symmetrical Atalanta, bounding by his side, in all her floating gracefulness—the beauty melting into tears at his recital in the garden of roses! And whilst this trance remained unbroken, he wished for nothing further than thus,

“To stand apart,  
And gaze for evermore!”

A strange delight and, comparatively speaking, a pure, tender, tranquil flame filled his soul, whilst thus he revelled in the dream of the past; for though even in his early days, his nature was little tinctured with the calm, soft purity of affection, usually belonging to the young, yet what were his feelings then, when estimated with the fierce passions of his manhood? Truly the cool river to the lava flood might not be deemed a greater contrast.

And Hardress Fitz Hugh felt all this, when the shadowy vision dissolved into reality. Yes, and he felt that she, the idol of his passion, was beyond his reach forever. Not because her imperial beauty lifted her so far above him; for through her perfect beauty, which, since he had last seen her, had matured into that of the splendid woman, he could still trace the same Sybil, whose every turn and glance he had once made so much his own—whose countenance was as familiar to his mind, as the air he breathed—the sun that brightened his path.

It was no external change that created the barrier between them, but she had become *another's*! a wife—a wife! hateful name to him, though he would fain have persuaded himself it formed but a flimsy veil of separation; still it was a raiment which, in spite of all the scorn he would willingly have called forth to crush it, in imagination, beneath his feet, he felt gall-

ing like a bar of iron, which effectually divided them forever. It was probably from something of the same inward impulse which had elicited from the Irish boy in the park at Oakleigh that savage howl, on beholding the meeting of Albert and Sybil, and had so startled his companion, that a muttered imprecation escaped the lips of the now civilized demagogue, as suddenly, before the *bullet* commenced, Albert, the beautiful, the noble, whom before he would not see, bent over her—spoke to her—drew full upon himself the smile, which *he*, Hardress Fitz Hugh, once possessed the power of causing to beam upon himself, and had immortalized by his glorious genius. And then he saw her rise—lean with such confiding fondness on the arm of that same hated being, who turned—he could almost have sworn, a look of taunting triumph on himself, as if he would have said, “You see she is mine!”—and they vanished from his sight—Sybil and her husband had departed.

The beautiful Norah Mahony, stood the next morning by the side of Hardress Fitz Hugh, silent and unnoticed, watching his every movement. From a receptacle for unframed pictures, mostly rough and unfinished productions of his youth, he had drawn forth one, placed it here, there, and everywhere, till he had found the spot “where sweetest sunshine fell,” and then, “ever retiring,” gazed with an eager varying countenance on this suddenly much appreciated work of his early days.

Norah at length broke the silence, and called him by his name. He made a quick, impatient movement. The warm blood rushed in a crimson flood over her creamy cheek. She fixed her eyes again on the object of his contemplations, and then turned them hastily round the walls of the room, adorned with many forms and faces, of the beautiful—the fair; and more especially riveted her gaze on the numerous pictures amongst them, which he had praised as the finest and best, and of which she had formed the model—from the pensive Magdalene, now completely finished, to,

“Italian Aphrodite, beautiful!  
Fresh as the foam, now bathed in Paphian wells,  
With rosy slender fingers, backward drew,  
From her warm brows and bosom, her deep hair,  
Ambrosial, golden, round her lucid throat,  
And shoulder!”

the latter a picture of such voluptuous loveliness, that no wonder its contemplation called forth from the young girl, who saw herself there depicted, this womanly exclamation—

“Now sure, Hardress!” she said, in that tone and accent of her country, which however discordant they may otherwise appear, could not but sound harmoniously when proceeding from the lips of one of Ireland’s fairest daughters, “will you refuse your Norah a word or a look, and all for the sake of looking on that maiden’s cold face, which smiles on you, as if she cared for you as little as the fair moon does for our own blue Killarney, when she shines upon its blessed waters?”

And though truly this representation was far from applicable to that Hebe portrait of the young Sybil, once described in the former part

of this story, and of which the picture under discussion was a copy—yet as the bright beams of the moon, contrasted with the glowing sun rays on the waters, so by comparison showed the countenance of passionless, innocent mirth, by the side of that voluptuous expression, depicted in the semblance of the impassioned Goddess of Beauty and Love.

Nor indeed had these latter attributes required much more force of coloring. Naturally inspired with the fervent, romantic feelings which distinguish in so remarkable a manner, the Irish people, even of the lowest classes—a characteristic with which no doubt, the picturesque variety of scenery, and natural features of their country, are much connected, the unfortunate Norah, had been transplanted from the freedom of her mountain air and simple cottage life, to the luxurious seclusion in which we now find her, surrounded by every luxury and refinement, in exchange for liberty and virtue; what wonder then, that whilst her intellect expanded, and her beauty matured into perfection, in this gilded hot-bed of vice, her passions all concentrated themselves on one object—all united into one overwhelming, prevailing feeling, that of love, most soft, most tender.

“Cold!” repeated Hardress, the words of Norah reaching his ears, but without drawing his attention to herself, “yes, cold now, but I will warm it.”

“Ah me!” exclaimed Norah, placing her hand softly on his arm, “you have warm and loving smiles enough, all around, Hardress, without hers.”

“Without hers,” he replied impetuously, “and what are the smiles of a whole nation of hours to me, if hers shine not on me?”

“What that cold young maiden’s?” again Norah slightly remarked, but with a troubled air, and countenance; “and who is she, Hardress?”

“I will tell you, Norah,” he exclaimed with passionate earnestness, turning round upon her, “she is one I loved when a cold young maiden, as you call her, and who now, having become a glorious woman, I adore.—Nay, foolish girl,” he continued with more gentleness, as Norah’s cheek blanched and her head drooped upon her bosom, “what matters it to thee? are you not still mine own mavoureen?”

“But what do they call her, Hardress?” enquired Norah, in a faint but somewhat reassured voice.

“Sybil Devereux!” he answered calmly, but in the next moment he suddenly rejoined in a voice of fury, “Sybil Devereux? what am I saying!—Sybil Lennard now!—Curse the name, and the man who gave it to her!”

“Oh sure then, she is a wife!” cried Norah, in a tone of relief, her countenance brightening.

“A wife, and what’s that to do with it?” exclaimed Hardress, turning fiercely on the poor girl—unable to brook hearing from another, that hated title brought forward, as the obstacle to separate him from Sybil—“Are you still such a fool, as not to know better than to attach any value to a mere empty sound?”

Norah trembled and retreated with a penitent but bewildered countenance. Her ideas of good



and evil, under his tutelage, had indeed become confused and dim, and yet there lingered in the mind of the poor young creature, a faint idea of some holy sanctity being attached to that name; and though the degree of importance with which her words invested it, had drawn on it such angry scorn from the being she had learnt to consider so all wise, she could not dispel from her mind the haunting memory of that certain mystic incense of holy purity, breathed over her humble home, by the ties which had bound her father and mother; or the feeling of some sacred charm having been conferred, through the medium of the solemn rites, which had endowed with the name of wife, a young friend and companion, whose bridal party she had followed to the little village church in her days of innocence. But Hardress had said all this was nonsense, therefore, such she supposed it must be.

From the period of the scene I have just described, the unfortunate being began to drink the bitter cup, the natural, but no less pitiable consequence of her unhappy condition. Till then her entire and unsophisticated ignorance of the outward world saved her from the torment it entailed. When the lover was away, she had fancied him immersed in the pursuits which won him glory and renown—but now a new world of torturing imaginations was opened to her sight, and to reflect upon, in her many lone and solitary hours.

She thought of Hardress in scenes of brilliant grandeur, amongst the fair, the young, the beautiful, with no sacred tie existing between them, to preserve him to her. Poor girl! the trace of knowledge having once taken root in her heart, it began to expand in a degree most fatal to her hitherto careless peace, and she began, though in a vague and undefined manner, to feel the precarious nature of her own position; no lawful obligation existing to bind the affections of the man she loved so tenderly—and still worse, wretched, maddening thought, his *love*, that precious love were not others free to possess it!—one by one other dreadful imaginations crowded into her fancy—Hardress would he—*could* he—cease to love her, as once he had done—might his love wax cold, or at most be but divided love?—and then the head of the wretched Norah would droop; she would clasp her small hands, and her attitude of despondency might well have served for the model of the despairing, heart-stricken Magdalene she had so often striven to portray, in those ecstatic days, when the bright flush of joy in her eye, was hard to conceal—even though the eyelids were forced for a brief space to shade the wild gleam of happiness and love, which sparkled from beneath them.

And then that cold smiling maiden, now the glorious woman as Hardress had described her; she ever came as a moonlight phantom to haunt her waking and sleeping hours. Not that Hardress ever spoke of her again, or gazed on that picture with the same ecstasy. On the contrary, from the day spent in retouching its faded colors and placing it in “a royal frame work of wrought gold,” Norah’s watchful eyes observed, that when his gaze did fall upon it, a

scowl, dark as night, would pass over his countenance, and sometimes a muttered oath escape his lips.

Yes, the select and peculiar circle to which the society of the Lennards was restricted, proved for some time an effectual bar to Fitz Hugh’s eagerly awaited renewal of an acquaintance with Sybil; for it was exactly that circle from which he was debarred—the tone of his political and moral principles closing the doors of the good and excellent against him. Nevertheless, he saw her constantly at the opera, ever shining near him, but out of his reach... once she had evidently recognized him; their eyes had met—oh, thrilling moment—Her color rose, and then her head was turned away, with a cold embarrassed air. From that time she never would see him again; he had been near her in the crush room, had heard her voice, her musical laugh, but she had studiously avoided catching his eye. But was it not because that hated Albert was by her side, placing an icy barrier between them?—he would see her without him.

He watched for her carriage in the Park; he saw her, but with her children—*his* children, and—how he hated them!—both possessing *his* abhorred beauty—his fair looks; their infantine features the image of the father’s.—Had they been like *her*, he might have forgiven them!—And then the excited man flew to the House of Commons, where those who listened to him, little imagined the chief sources of the startling, fearful eloquence, which inspired those portions of his harangues, manifesting itself in that bitter irony and cutting satire, in which he so eminently excelled. It was with covert but effectual tact, that these barbed arrows of sarcasm were aimed at his Tory rival, Albert Lennard, whenever, as was often the case, they came in opposition to one another.

But this outward show of excitement by degrees exhausted itself; yielding, however, to a far deeper, and more dangerous characteristic of his nature, to work out its course in wily silence. For a period Hardress’s zeal in his political avocations had appeared to sustain a temporary relaxation, which his friends ascribed to the ill assimilating talents, to which he devoted himself in so strict a manner; but now again his ardor in his public pursuits seemed to revive. He had even too been brought by chance into close contact with the Lennards, but no apparent concern was evinced by him, in regard to this circumstance, beyond the most fashionable careless stare, with which he had passed on composedly, as if neither anxious nor willing to give them an opportunity of making any advances towards recognition.

## CHAPTER XXIII.

“She had pleasant ways  
Your good opinion of her heart to raise;

Wit was allowed her, though few could bring  
Direct example of a witty thing;

Novels and plays, with poems old and new,  
Were all the books—attended to;  
Yet from the press no treatise issued forth,  
But she would speak precisely of its worth.

Her reputation? that was like her wit,  
And seemed her manner, and her state to fit.  
CRABBE.

THERE is a society in London distinct from that termed *fashionable*, and even more exclusive to the world in general; "looking down, as its votaries do, on all the puerile and low souled vanities of the former set—on their lackies, and their lords, their strutting and their style, with as undazzled and untroubled eyes, as eagles can be supposed to cast on glowworms, when they have been gazing on the sun." I allude to the society of *savans* and literati, into whose clique Hardress Fitz Hugh, soon after the commencement of his London career, found himself installed; not only was he admitted into this coterie with eagerness, but he was courted and admired by the members as one of its most distinguished lions. And never was man formed better suited to shine in such a circle—his Porteus-like genius being able to mould itself to every branch of polite art or abstruse science—to dive into the profoundest depths of metaphysics, and her dark crudities, or to soar to the brilliant heights of the beautiful and the sublime.

It was, therefore, in such circles that he chiefly mixed; and amongst the members that formed them, he found some of his most familiar associates.

Although I should be sorry to make a general, sweeping conclusion, it is to be feared that too often in such societies the refinement of vice and depravity is to be met with. Into their specious precincts, under the glittering cloak of genius and renown, "creep men of corrupt minds"—and alas! does not the context to that quotation seem but too true an application, "and lead away silly women, laden with sin, vainly puffed up!" For if by the paths of frivolity the weaker sex are but too often conducted to the high roads of ruin, how much greater danger do those incur, whose weak minds, inflated by "vain conceit" of fancied superiority of intellect, become entangled in the mazes of vicious sophistry—oppositions of science falsely so called!

Whether Mrs. Clareville had suffered from her entrance into those critical paths, it is not my intention now to pause to analyse; enough that it is my revolting task to bring this character forward in these pages—to say that she was one of these favored members—one of the stamp generally to be found mixed up in such societies, who have by some means gained admittance therein, without possessing the slightest claim to those qualifications of which the clique *profess* to be composed.

Of any degree approaching to profundity or brilliancy of talent, Mrs. Clareville could not boast—yet in this set she was established; moreover, she had managed to obtain the epithet of *blue*, and the patronage of learned men—the extent of her own pretensions to the former privilege, consisting in a thorough appreciation of French novels; and the very skillful manner in which she directed the incense of flattery, and flirting, the secret of her influence over the minds of the male part of the community. Of her private history I have

only to say, that the lady in question was separated from her husband—the Honorable William Clareville, and what is more to the purpose of my story—she was cousin to Albert Lennard.

Her house was one of the principle resorts of the enlightened coterie, and there Hardress Fitz Hugh often spent occasional idle moments; it being a convenient *rendezvous*, on his way from the House to his lodgings, to drop in, in order to talk over with some literary crony any leading subject of interest, either political or scientific, or to gratify the fair hostess with half an hour's *tele-a-tele*.

On one of these latter occasions—about the middle of the London season, soon after his entrance, Mrs. Clareville announced the disagreeable necessity which obliged her to leave him, in order to dress for an early dinner to which she was engaged for that evening; but she entreated him—to make up for her disappointment in thus being cheated of his society—to wait and accompany her to her destination, and then let the carriage take him on to his own abode.

Hardress hesitated—stating, as an objection, that a lady's toilette was a serious affair.

"And Faith! he would not be the man to hurry it; nor," he inwardly murmured, "would he keep his little Norah waiting its whole length for the sake of a drive with you, my lady!"

But Mrs. Clareville would hear of no refusal; hers would be no *grande toilette* that evening. It was but to a stupid family party she was going, at the house of a relation; and ere he had looked over that clever pamphlet on Meteorological Observation, or that witty review of a new novel—of which she was dying for his opinion, she would be with him again; and playfully placing before him these aforesaid works, she departed, leaving Hardress, with an exclamation hovering on his lips, probably not very dissimilar to that which first introduced him into notice at Oakleigh Court—"Och! bother the women!" Thus engaged in spite of himself, he glanced at first slightly at the magazines, then casting them away, threw himself back on a *bergere*, and was soon absorbed in the resources ever supplied by his own fertile imagination. With head thrown back, and "eyes upraised as one inspired," he remained for a time, till some bright idea appearing to catch his fancy, he started upright, took a pencil from his pocket, and turned round to seek, on a table near him, a piece of waste paper, on which to embody it.

He snatched up the first scrap he saw—a note with a tempting fly-leaf, and was about to appropriate it to his use, when two words written thereon, arrested him in the act—suddenly, as if by a stroke of paralysis. It was the signature of "*Sybil Lennard*" in clear and beautiful autograph.

When Mrs. Clareville in an elegant *demi-toilette*, descended to the drawing-room, after a good hour's absence, she found her guest fuming with impatience for her appearance—and



cutting short her apologies, he abruptly acquired,

"How long have you been acquainted with the Lennards?"

"With the Lennards? Oh! now Mr. Fitz Hugh, you are going to take me to task I see, for being a deserter to the enemy! But how can I help myself, when one's own blood is amongst them?"

"What do you mean?" demanded Hardress, sternly.

"The fact is," replied Mrs. Clareville, "Albert Lennard is my cousin, and I am obliged, occasionally, to do a bit of duty, such as is entailed on me to night. But you have seen the wife, I suppose! Now she, I am sure, would tempt even you within the doors of your Tory rival."

"By Jupiter, and would she!" was Hardress's emphatic, but indefinite reply.

Mrs. Clareville gazed on his inflamed and excited countenance inquiringly, and her curiosity was not only fully satisfied ere they parted at the door of her relation's house, but she entered it, pledged to do him most important service therein, in reward for his confidence.

The night that Mrs. Clareville dined for the first time at the Lennards', Albert and Sybil had insisted on my being also at the table, for my dear friend, Lady Mordaunt, was of the party; her husband, sisters-in-law, and another gentleman, were the only additions besides.

Mrs. Clareville had been invited to join this familiar circle, more as a matter of necessity than of choice; that necessity arising from Albert's deeming it incumbent on him to take some particular notice of a near relative, in return for several unaccepted invitations to her house, as well as other advances towards intimacy on the part of that lady. It may well be imagined that with his fastidious sentiments with regard to women, Mrs. Clareville was one, whom he had no desire to see installed as an intimate in his house. He did however at length agree with Sybil on the propriety of the step in question, and then another impediment had arisen, as to who was to be asked to meet her—this difficulty springing up from the disagreeable conclusion to which they had arrived, that poor Mrs. Clareville was looked upon somewhat shyly, by the select society which they were in the habit of assembling round their table.

Not that there was any tangible objection attached to her character; such a circumstance would have been at once sufficient to have shut the door of Albert's house against her remotest approach towards his wife. No! even on the point of her separation from her husband, she had the best of the story on her side; Mr. Clareville being one of the wildest and most dissolute of men.

Still, amongst the fashionable, as well as the stricter set, she was not popular, and finding herself black-balled in those exclusive circles, was probably the secret of her having taken refuge in the clique, in which we find her, a self-constituted member. Therefore Mrs. Clareville would have been as a black sheep amongst the *recherche* knot, generally gracing the dinner-

table in Park-lane; so, in consideration of this, the Lennards had decided to ask her merely to dine with them, *en famille*; Lady Mordaunt being entreated as a favor to come and meet her—and her sisters-in-law having proposed being of the party.

Mrs. Clareville, on her part, evinced no signs of misgivings as to any lack of cordiality existing in the sentiments of her relatives, towards herself; on the contrary she made herself quite at home, in a most cousin-like manner—overwhelmed the children when they appeared before dinner, with caresses and admiration, and treated Sybil with the patronizing tenderness of an elder sister.

Mrs. Clareville was about half way between thirty and forty, possessing rather an elegant person, and with insinuating manners overstrained to affectation. She talked a great deal, and, with much tact, adopted her discourse to suit her different hearers. At dinner, however, it was almost entirely the attention of Albert—by whose side she sat—that she strove to monopolize.

I remember her trying to give a learned turn to the conversation, and the cold encouragement to this design she received from her host, who, like most clever men, had no great fancy for anything approaching to blue stocking pretensions. Notwithstanding, Mrs. Clareville gained her purpose, and soon contrived to engage him in what appeared a most scientific discussion of some leading subject of interest. Albert then assured the fair lady that she was getting on ground too deep for him, and called on Sir William Mordaunt to come to his assistance; but when that gentleman did enter upon the subject, thereby provoking him to join in the argument, Albert's fine, clear, simply expressed remarks, showed that the topic was far from being beyond his exalted but unpretending intellectual powers—and Mrs. Clareville's manoeuvres, had gained their intended consequence.

I heard her telling Albert of the interest this topic was exciting in the circles of the talented. She had lately attended lectures on the same subject, from Professors A. and B. Then she added, that those two distinguished scholars, with other clever men, were to honor her house with making it their *rendezvous*, on the evening of the 5th instant; she finally invited Mr. Lennard to come with his wife, and swell the honorable number, and wrung from him, before she left the table, a somewhat hesitatingly conceded promise to keep this appointment.

After dinner, the Miss Mordaunts—who had now arrived at an age when ladies consider, that increased and especial care is requisite, in the outward adornment of their persons, begged leave to retire "to put themselves to rights" for the ball, they were to grace with their presence that night, and remained absent for a considerable time. Lady Mordaunt accompanied me on my visit to the nursery, so that Sybil was left *tele-a-tele* with Mrs. Clareville.

On our rejoining them, they were sitting together on a sofa, engaged, apparently, in a con-

versation of interest. I heard Mrs. Clareville say as we entered the room,

"Oh! I assure you, my dear, it is quite true; but do not tell your husband this, or I shall never get you to my party—"

She abruptly changed the subject when she perceived our approach.

I glanced at Sybil; a blushing smile was lingering on her countenance.

I have since learnt the nature of that conversation. Mrs. Clareville informed Mrs. Lennard that she had made her husband promise to bring her to the party, and mentioned, in a casual manner, amongst others, that she would meet at it, the name of Hardress Fitz Hugh—a circumstance which naturally excited Sybil's interest, and caused her to explain to Mrs. Clareville, the acquaintance once existing between them; upon which the lady hinted, with a certain air of mystery, that she had already been fully informed of it, and then proceeded to comment on Fitz Hugh, as one of the most gifted of human beings.

"In point of talent he was ever so," I believe was Sybil's rather cold rejoinder, "but from what I have heard of his character, I fear, not in any other respect." And this speech gave rise to a more particular discussion on the subject, Mrs. Clareville taking up the defence of her friend, or at least alleging many excuses in his favor. One great extenuation for his rash follies—in fact the real cause of all that was faulty, arose, she remarked in a most emphatic manner, from the disappointment of a very early but deep and indelible attachment; and when she noted that her listener's interest had been in some degree revived, for one, whom she had never quite banished from her remembrance, as the devoted, amusing companion of some of her happiest, youthful days, Mrs. Clareville archly insinuated, that it was *she*, who had been the idol, whose power had cast so dark a veil over the virtuous part of the career of the young Irishman; that the memory of her young loveliness still remained his *beau idéal* of perfection, though now he only regarded her with profound respect—mingled, however, with many a pang of deep, agonizing regret.

This communication Sybil received with laughing, careless incredulity; the cautiously conveyed insinuations of Mrs. Clareville reaching, but in a very vague form, the comprehension of her innocent, and unsophisticated listener.

How much of this conversation Sybil imparted to her husband I did not ascertain, but I heard her informing him, before retiring that evening, that if they went to Mrs. Clareville's, they would meet Mr. Fitz Hugh.

"Of course," rejoined Albert, laughingly, "if we venture amongst the lions, we must make up our minds to meet the most formidable of those animals."

"But rival lions sometimes fight," continued Sybil in the same tone, "and when Greek meets Greek then comes the tug of war."

"Oh! you need feel no alarm, dear Sybil," replied Albert; "Mrs. Clareville's is a scientific, not a political party, and on the former

score I shall never presume to set myself up as a rival to Fitz Hugh."

Sybil had been in the habit, from the commencement of her London campaign, of making me the depositor of all her thoughts and feelings, and of course the circumstances of her first recognition of Fitz Hugh—a person connected in so interesting a manner, with our Oakleigh Court reminiscences—had not been omitted amongst her various communications. She had expressed how strange appeared her first experience of a circumstance, which soon became one of common occurrence: namely, the fact of beholding again, after the lapse of many years, a person with whom she had once been on terms of close intimacy, but whom now it was impossible—even if she felt it desirable—that she should recognize as an acquaintance. For a barrier was placed between them, both on account of the adverse sides of politics, taken by her husband and Fitz Hugh, and the evident repugnance to the general character of Hardress, experienced by Albert. She had expatiated much on the embarrassment she should feel whenever she chanced to meet his eye, without the power of owning him as a former friend.

No little interest did Sybil therefore now express at the prospect of their being thrown so closely together at Mrs. Clareville's; and much eager curiosity did she evince, as to the issue of the event; for uninitiated as she still remained—so new to all the proceedings of the world, a circumstance which would have made but very little impression upon one of its more experienced members, was to her perfect excitement, and rendered doubly interesting by the revelations of Mrs. Clareville. All know the natural weakness implanted more or less in the breast of every woman, therefore it is needless to attempt to analyze the feeling of gratified vanity, which beat almost unconsciously at the heart of Sybil Lennard; and certainly it was only reasonable that she should look forward to meeting Hardress Fitz Hugh with somewhat softened sentiments, since her fading interest had been thus newly rekindled by Mrs. Clareville's late communication respecting him. Of late she had begun to regard him as an indifferent stranger—one who evidently shunned with almost marked rudeness, a renewal of their acquaintance. How completely may our view of a subject be changed by the magic sound of a few words!

## CHAPTER XXIV.

\* \* \* In mind  
A wit as various—gay, grave, sage, or wild,—  
Historian, bard, philosopher combined;  
He multiplied himself among mankind,  
The Proteus of their talents. CHILDE HAROLD.

THE appointed night arrived, and on repairing to Mrs. Clareville's, the Lennards found themselves in her elegant drawing-rooms, surrounded by many a brilliant star of talent and genius. The usual observation of those not accustomed to frequent such like assemblies, must



be greatly struck with the strange contrast which its company often affords, to that of circles, where the outer, not the inner man is intended to shine. Genius, generally speaking, seems as if it would manifest contempt for the inferior gifts of personal beauty, by choosing for its abode the forms most niggardly endowed by nature, with those attributes—and in order to carry out this design to its fullest extent—those whom genius thus favors, often appear ambitious to show every mark of scorn for any outward grace, by a decided neglect or conspicuous disfigurement in some way or another, of their persons. On the present occasion, there was no lack of instances, to afford examples of these peculiarities—from the slovenly Dr. —, with his dirty nails, to the *outré* turbaned Lady—of blue stocking celebrity.

But viewed *en masse*, this was all a very piquant and amusing novelty, to those who mixed for the first time in such society: and so it therefore proved to Sybil and Albert: who, after a reception of much affectionate cordiality from their hostess cousin, sat in the midst of the motley group, watching the guests as they assembled.

Albert, however, was not allowed long to remain a mere spectator. Soon he was marched off by Mrs. Clareville, to undergo the ceremony of introduction to the *élite*, forced to take his place amidst the most distinguished lions; and to engage in the learned conversations in agitation amongst the different circles of the *coterie*, whilst Sybil smiled to see the graceful form of her husband, group itself contrastingly with many a figure, which had just before greatly excited her quick sense of the ridiculous.

Genius had indeed strangely departed from its fanciful rule, in making Albert Lennard its dwelling-place!

Sybil was suffered for some time to sit apart, looked down upon by most of the ladies of the party, as an interloper—one “amongst them, but not of them,” her personal charms only rendering her intrusion the more unpardonable; whilst, by the male part of the community, she was scrutinized with the critical gaze, with which they would have examined some fine work of art, from which they expected no further advantage.

Suddenly, whilst she was thus seated in solitary state—for Mrs. Clareville was occupied in receiving her guests—the well known name of Fitz Hugh sounded on her ear, announced by the servants; and as her chair was exactly opposite the door, she had only to raise her eyes to behold the unprepossessing figure of her *ci devant* Irish friend, make his entry into the room.

But so familiar did his appearance seem at that moment, that when she saw him look straight across the apartment, towards her in his own peculiar manner, half closing his eyes, in order to make a clearer observation, her parted lips almost moved into a smile; and it seemed quite strange and unnatural when, having leisurely withdrawn his scrutiny—as if satisfied with his survey—after exchanging a few words with Mrs. Clareville, he walked away in a different direction. He was shortly surround-

ed by a knot of friends, who eagerly welcomed him to join in some learned disputation, that was going on; his voice was soon raised in energetic argument, and was listened to by the gravest of his hearers, with the greatest apparent consideration and reverence.

Albert was amongst the group, but remained for some time a silent auditor of the discourse; till suddenly a talented professor of the party, after an opinion, given by Fitz Hugh on some particular point, interrupted him with the remark;

“Ah, here then is a gentleman whom you will find to agree with you perfectly in that opinion; he seems to see it exactly in the same light!” and he turned to Albert Lennard, who being thus brought forward, bowed, and was about to make some observation, when he was startled by Fitz Hugh’s stretching out his hand, as if with a sudden impulse of true Hibernian warmth, and exclaiming:

“Ah, now, Mr. Lennard, I am glad we find ourselves agreed on some point at last! so I think, as old acquaintances, we may be allowed to shake hands upon it.”

Albert could do no less than give his hand, though he did so with more of cold courtesy, than cordiality.

This little scene, however, was watched by Sybil with sensations of pleasure,—not unlike those she had experienced on witnessing their meeting at Oakleigh Court, when the bearing of Albert and Hardress towards one another had taken so different a coloring to that which she had at first anticipated. She now felt she should really be rather glad that the two young men were again on friendly terms. As for political differences, she was aware that in general society, they were seldom allowed to be a bar to common intercourse; and as to the private character of Fitz Hugh, Mrs. Clareville, by her energetic advocacy in his defence, had much softened the prejudices which her mind had imbibed concerning it. Even supposing his conduct not so entirely *sans reproche* as it might be, “the mysteries of iniquity,” were by her so vaguely understood, that she did not think it could be sufficiently blameable, to justify their quite giving up an old acquaintance—the nephew too of her father’s friend.

It was therefore with increased satisfaction, that she remarked the conversation proceed, apparently upon a more familiar footing than the constrained manner in which it had at first commenced; she noted also her husband’s countenance assume a less distant expression and finally he crossed the room and approached her.

“Sybil! Mr. Fitz Hugh wishes to renew his acquaintance with you,” he said, but in a tone not significant of any very great gratification at the idea of such a step.

Sybil, however, smiled and gave her hand to Hardress, which was received and shaken with the same friendly warmth, which had characterized his greeting with her husband; and remaining by her side, they were soon in the midst of an eager conversation on days gone by, in which Albert joined, till drawn away by Mrs. Clareville to undergo some fresh introdu-

tion. And thus, with seeming simplicity of purpose, was brought about that point which for many a day had been the ardently—fiercely desired aim of Hardress Fitz Hugh. To be again seated by Sybil's side, to have the power of gazing on her face, whilst on him again beamed forth her bewitching glance—her "most bewildering smile"—all this was accomplished; and so intoxicating was the enjoyment he experienced, that when the chilling restraint, which the hateful presence of Albert had imposed, was removed, he forgot all but the delight of the moment, and sat as it were drinking,

"The cup of costly death  
Brimmed with delicious draught of warmest life."

It was well—but no—alas! it was most sad—most pitiful, that Sybil read naught of the nature of the fixed gaze, that man riveted upon her countenance, as she continued giving him some information respecting Oakleigh Court, which he had asked of her. By the time she had ceased speaking, and he was required to answer, he had recovered his presence of mind, and starting from his trance, launched forth again, as the witty, entertaining companion of former days, but in comparison, as superior in brilliancy to the uncultivated youth of Oakleigh Court, as the polished diamond to the rough cut stone.

To regain his *à dévaut* position in her eyes, by a display of his highly wrought mental qualifications, was, for the present moment, the height of his ambition; that would be his first stepping stone towards more serious progress. It was far indeed from his intention to pause there. No—he would invoke a power, which should gradually infuse its poison into her now innocent soul, and reach the dormant passions, which lay there, hitherto unawakened. Yes; the longer he gazed and mused upon her face, the more did he, who had made the human countenance so much his study, come to the conviction, that the work was yet to be commenced—that though the natural tenderness of a woman's nature towards the being to whom fate had linked her, might have warmed her near to the most affectionate feelings, *love*—according to his idea of that passion—had never yet inflamed her breast. Or would he now have been looking on a face, which had scarcely altered in its expression, since he last beheld her, as the calm—innocent—unconscious girl Sybil—with a countenance as free and open as the bright day.

"The breath of passion," muttered Hardress, "leaves traces never to be effaced."

He thought of Norah, and the change its fevered breath had wrought on her, and who had been the magician, whose power had called it forth!—Then the words of the Irish girl, when alluding to the portrait of her, on whom his eyes were now fixed, sounded on his fancy, and again he murmured, but this time with a thrill of joy,

"Yes; cold, cold, as the moon—but I will warm it."

"We have had such a delightful evening!" exclaimed Sybil—on my repairing as was my

wont, after comparatively early parties, such as that of this night, to her dressing room to bid her good night, "but only think how it has passed!—Talking to Hardress Fitz Hugh, the whole of the time."

"Indeed!" said I, interested, but not over and above pleased.

"Yes!" she replied, and then proceeded to relate to me how it had all been brought about. "And you can have no idea," she added, "how he has improved!—Polished and refined, of course, in a great measure in comparison to what he was as a youth—yet with none of the originality which used to constitute his chief charm, being thereby destroyed."

"Charm!" I repeated, with some asperity, "Really, my dear, I never remember Mr. Fitz Hugh to have possessed any attribute deserving that term."

"Ah, I know, Felicie," she said, laughing, "he was never a great favorite of your's, but to me I must confess there was always something like a charm in that wild originality of his.—He was so unlike everybody else—so strangely amusing! But truly, it would be a sad injustice, merely to apply the term amusing to his conversation; it is really now—one might say—enchanting in its wild variety of style and matter. Albert tells me that it is the usual characteristic of Irish eloquence, with which Mr. Fitz Hugh is gifted in so striking a degree, and that the diversity and fanciful character of the natural scenery of the country often produces some effect on the imaginations of the natives—I am sure such is the case with our friend—indeed, when he was descending to me to-night on the picturesque features of Ireland, so vividly did he impart to his manner of description, their different delineations, that the grand, lovely, rugged, gentle, all appeared really to pass before my eyes. He seemed to embody all the peculiar traits of his native land—the spirit of its nature infused into his very being."

"Upon my word, Mademoiselle," said Albert, who had joined us, and stood listening to this last enthusiastic speech of his young wife, a sly smile playing on his lips, "Sybil has caught the infection of some of the eloquence which has so excited her admiration. But I shall be very jealous. Pray let me hear no ecstasies from your lips, Mrs. Lennard, but in praise of your own husband," he continued, laughing. "I am really glad that we are not likely to fall much in the way of this *handsome* Demosthenes."

"Handsome!" interrupted Sybil, with her merriest and most spontaneous laugh. "Oh, Albert, that is very ill-natured of you. No! Mr. Fitz Hugh's beauty is certainly not improved; there is something even more singular and striking in his countenance than formerly—almost disagreeably peculiar is it, when he is not speaking. The civilized appearance he has now assumed, probably makes the singularity of his person more remarkable than when all was in character. Looking at you, Albert, and Mr. Fitz Hugh, standing together, the contrast was most strange. But that is no compliment to you, sir," she continued, playfully, "for to judge by the general appearance of the whole community—to be ugly is to be great."



"To be good is to be great," was my most governess like remark, thinking as I then was of Hardress Fitz Hugh.

"Oh, Albert!" proceeded Sybil, "you have no idea what an ungenerous prejudice Felicie has conceived against the poor Fitz Hugh!—worse even than you entertained against the Miss Mordaunts, or any other of your aversions."

"My dear Sybil, do not, I entreat, make me out such a very unamiable creature, by talking in so sweeping a manner of my aversions. But if I do not express the violent admiration, with which you are so quickly fired, you attribute my more measured commendation to aversion. It is fortunate for you," he continued, smiling, "that you have Mademoiselle and your husband to throw a little cold water on your ecstatic enthusiasm."

Sybil received this justly implied reproof with the same sweetness, which, when a child ever distinguished her reception, of Albert's brotherly taking to task. She only remarked, that she thought living in London was sufficient alone to do away with every thing like exclusive enthusiasm and admiration towards any one object—for that the society of the great metropolis, though very delightful and brilliant, was too much *en masse*, too much composed of beings engrossed in the business of forming part of the glittering show—to allow of any one enjoying, or even discerning much of their several merits.

Yes! Mrs. Lennard had been greatly struck by this part of her London experience. The exclusiveness of her education had produced in her the very opposite result—a thirst for genial companionship—an inclination which her married career had hitherto continued to curb; and now her transient experience of society had brought with it disappointment.

She, indeed, found every one well disposed to seek her acquaintance, but all seemed too much occupied by their own interests and affairs, to have breathing time to devote to any thing approaching to friendly intimacy.

Even in the case of the Miss Mordaunts; so overwhelming as they had been in their advances to strict fellowship in the country—in London she found no necessity whatever for exercising any of the discretion with respect to over-intimacy, which the remembrance of her husband's former animadversions on the subject might have caused her to deem requisite. No, these young ladies were far too much engrossed in the general bustle of their day and night flirtations, to give her much of their particular society, especially since possessing an efficient chaperone in their sister-in-law, they had no need to call upon Sybil for her services in that capacity.

There was doubtless, too, some policy in the want of inclination displayed by the Miss Mordaunts to make use of the lovely young matron in this office.

They had perhaps suffered too much already in similar instances. Experience had taught them not to place themselves willingly under the shadowy eclipse of a young and attractive married woman's influence—that delightful ground on which the male species of the pre-

sented day, so eagerly take refuge for the amusement which, in such safe quarters, they think they may pursue without the terror of raising any serious expectations.

Thus, as I have before said, the social anticipations of Sybil were frustrated. With the want of discrimination of character which her inexperience and secluded education had engendered, was it then unnatural that she should be easily inclined to meet the eager advances of the only person who did seem so affectionately and warmly anxious to forward an intimacy—one too so eminently adapted to gain an ascendancy over the mind of such a complete novice.

Yes, indeed, Mrs. Clareville having once accomplished a footing in her cousin Lennard's house, no longer was it possible to exclude her, as had been done before; and from the night of the party at her house, which Sybil and Albert had attended, her intimacy with the former seemed rapidly to gain ground.

She came constantly to Park-lane, and occasionally accompanied Mrs. Lennard in her drives. Albert at that time was much immersed in his official and Parliamentary duties, but when Sybil's communications made him cognizant of these proceedings, he would entreat her not to become more intimate with Mrs. Clareville, than was strictly due to their (I knew he thought) unfortunate relationship.

"Above all," I heard him once say, "let your intercourse with her be confined chiefly to your own home. Let her come here if she will, but do not, dearest, go to her house oftener than you can help. It would not be at all expedient for you to make acquaintances of her friends." Sybil, I saw, was evidently relieved when she found that a veto was not put upon all association with one so apparently kind, amiable, and well-disposed towards her—one who was so agreeable and flattering a companion—yes, *flattering*, for who does not ~~flatter~~ the charm which that unctious can be made to work—in the hands of one skilled in its application, in more experienced eyes than those of poor Sybil Lennard?—one who, with discriminate tact has the power of leaving persons pleased with themselves, and consequently satisfied with all around.

On her return from some of these drives with Mrs. Clareville, Sybil told me of their having fallen in with Fitz Hugh, and once—only once, on a morning visit to that lady, which could not be avoided, she had met him there.

Albert's fatiguing avocations formed a good excuse for their refusing Mrs. Clareville's evening invitations; nor did that lady, I believe, make a great point of their accepting them. Once Fitz Hugh had made his way into the set from which he had hitherto been excluded; and such occasions of *rencontre* seemed likely to become more frequent as he became more generally known, and his high connections—that circumstance which covers so many sins in the eyes of the fashionable world, joined to his extraordinary powers of agreeability, began to cause him to be more universally appreciated.

The Lennards met him at an assembly, a

which Sybil remarked to me, Hardress had scarcely approached her. There he was, however, and evidently sought after by the clever ones of the party; so that of course she could not expect much attention from him, especially as Albert's repulsive manner was not likely to make Mr. Fitz Hugh seek their vicinity. The season was fast drawing towards a close; at the end of August we were to return to Llewellyn. No further intercourse than I have already related, had been brought about between Fitz Hugh and Sybil, till just before the period fixed for the departure of the Lennards, when an opportunity enabled me for the first time (though I had occasionally passed him out of doors) to be with Mrs. Lennard in Hardress Fitz Hugh's company.

## CHAPTER XXV.

Think'st thou there are no serpents in the world  
But those who slide along the grassy sod,  
And sting the luckless foot that presses them.  
There are, who in the path of social life,  
Do bask their spotted skins in fortune's sun,  
And sting the soul—aye, till its healthful frame  
Is changed to secret—festering—sore disease.

JOANNA BAILLIE.

“ONE morning Sybil entered the school-room and asked me to accompany her to the British Museum. She said, she thought the children might also be of the party, for there might be objects of interest to little Mary; we accordingly set off—Mrs. Lennard, the two young ones, and myself.

Mrs. Clareville was to meet us at the Museum, and we found her already there, awaiting our arrival, in company with Mr. Fitz Hugh, who immediately hastened forward to hand Sybil from the carriage, exclaiming,

“Oh! Mrs. Lennard, I am delighted to have this pleasure!”

Sybil, blushing and smiling, gave him her hand, saying,

“You here, Mr. Fitz Hugh?”

With her accustomed, easy grace, she stepped from the carriage, then turned to see the same office performed for the rest of the party, and the children were lifted out by him.

He had looked at me with his odd expression of former days, which reminded me of our first interview at Oakleigh Court, but when it came to my turn, he handed me out with great politeness, exclaiming with jocose cordiality, as if for the first time being made aware of my identity.

“Is it you, Mademoiselle Felicie? Well, I am glad to see an old friend again; and I hope you have not quite forgotten the wild Irish cub of Oakleigh Court—blessed be its memory!”

And so exactly did he re-assume the tone and manner of the days to which he referred, that Sybil's merry laugh sounded from delight at hearing him exhibit once more, the droll characteristics of old, which used to afford her such never failing diversion.

I, however, merely bowed somewhat coldly, I believe; for truly, the wild Irish cub had never been any great favorite of mine, nor I of his. Still less inclination did I feel, to stand in

that light towards him in his present character—the full grown *lion*, which he had now become.

“You see, my dear Mrs. Lennard,” Mrs. Clareville exclaimed, “I have brought you a very efficient *cicerone*. Such a companion is requisite, to render a place like this at all interesting to us ignoramuses,” she continued addressing me, and falling back to my side as we entered—politely evincing that she wished to make me feel familiar with the rest of the party. “Mr. Fitz Hugh, as you probably know, is the very Prince of science. Were his talents much developed, when he was a boy?” she inquired, “for I find, Mademoiselle, that you are old acquaintances. The progress of a genius must be a most interesting subject of observation.”

“At the period of Mr. Fitz Hugh's abode at Oakleigh,” I answered, “he was a youth of eighteen or nineteen; and then the art of painting was the most conspicuous talent he displayed.”

“Oh! yes! and that talent is now, I assure you, brought to a most glorious pitch of perfection. It is a pity he is only an amateur—his portraits are the most exquisite things imaginable.” Now, those lovely children—no one would do them more justice, if he could only be prevailed on to set about their pictures. I shall really speak to Mr. Lennard upon the subject—would it not be delightful, Mademoiselle?”

“I believe it is decided that Sir Thomas Lawrence is to take the three in a group,” I replied in so cold a tone, that Mrs. Clareville merely remarked in return, “that certainly there would be no time this season to carry out the plan,” and then carelessly changed the subject.

We followed Hardress and Sybil, who were preceeding a little in advance—the former with Bertie in his arms. I had seen him lift up the child—part his hair from his brow, and gaze with artist-like observation, on his sweet face.

“Is he not beautiful?” Sybil had murmured, “and so like his father!”

“Ah! but he has his mother's smile!” remarked Hardress, with little of the wild Irish cub now in his manner; and, as if to ascertain more clearly the point, he fixed his eyes on her countenance—then turned and kissed the boy!

I could not bear to see the act, nor the dear little head lying so confidently on that man's shoulder. I felt that Sybil was right, and that I was strongly prejudiced against Mr. Fitz Hugh.

“What is that gentleman's name, Mademoiselle?” said little Mary, whom I was leading by the hand, when we chanced to be separated from the rest of the party for a few moments.

“His name is Mr. Fitz Hugh, darling.”

“Is he not very ugly, Mademoiselle?” she gently suggested.

“We must not make remarks on peoples' looks, Mary; goodness, not beauty, we should most consider.”

“But is Mr. Fitz Hugh good?” the child persisted.

I hesitated.



"Do not you think he looks so?" I asked.

"Not very," she timidly replied, "and I do not like anybody who looks neither good nor pretty, to walk and talk with mamma, for she is so good and pretty herself."

I was silent.

Mary's artless remark, coincided so precisely with the thoughts, which, at the time, were passing through my mind, that I could not, in this instance, reprove, as I ever considered it my duty to do any invidious personal observations. The speech too, was rendered more deserving of notice, as coming from those

Sweet lips whereon perpetually did reign,  
The summer calm of golden charity.

Is it, that purity in its most refined nature—such as existed in the heart of that child, possesses a property which shrinks instinctively at the very presence of an impure soul, in like manner as the sensitive plant, at the human touch—or was it that a warning voice of jealous solicitude, was imparted to the love—I may well say—beyond that of common childhood—towards her mother, which filled the heart of little Mary! But more on that theme hereafter.

As I said, her remark was strangely coincident with my thoughts; for, just at that moment, the idea of Beauty and the Beast, had arisen before my mind's eye.

We had then contemplated the afternoon's entertainment; that is to say, we had inspected everything curious and interesting belonging to the institution. Our cicerone had, indeed, proved a most efficient one—peculiarly calculated to render doubly instructive and amusing, each object which fell under our observation. Still, though I scarce knew why, I felt uncomfortable and ill at ease; especially so, at the moment when Mary uttered her innocent comments on her mother's companion; for the party were then lingering in the gallery, Mrs. Clareville declaring she must rest, and Sybil was seated by her side, and her beautiful eyes, full of animation and interest, were raised to the strange countenance of Hardress Fitz Hugh who bent over her. I was struck in a forcible manner by something which carried me back, in imagination, to the cottage garden at Oakleigh Court. Not that the singular contrast, afforded by the appearance of the two, had excited my jealous criticism, (as in the case of Mary) but some feeling of a scarcely definable nature lurked in my heart.

We approached the group—Sybil made room for me to seat myself, but I declined, saying, I supposed we should be going; at the same time mentioning the hour, as a gentle hint to expedite our departure, for which I began to be impatient.

But a little scene was first to be enacted, which, though apparently of a trivial nature, was not devoid of interest; my sweet Mary was its originator and heroine.—I will not pass it over. On our joining the party, encouraged by a smile from her mother, she had gladly accepted the seat by her side, which I had rejected, and gently taking her hand, looked up in her face. Sybil stooped down and kissed the

child, then parting the hair from the fair brow, said,

"And what do you think of this little face, Mr. Fitz Hugh!—a true Madonna's countenance, is it not?"

"An angel's!" was the answer, and at the same moment, the man stooped down, and on the spot—fragrant with the mother's sweet and holy kiss—he pressed his impious lips.

My blood boiled, as though I had been witness to a daring act of sacrilege—and mine were not the only feelings outraged by the deed.

On Mr. Fitz Hugh's raising his head, little Mary's fair face was one flush of rosy red—her countenance the picture of startled dismay, almost amounting to horror; the next moment, she had hidden her face in her mother's bosom, and burst into a flood of tears.

This catastrophe produced no inconsiderable sensation. Both Mrs. Clareville and the offender professed much amusement at the sensitive prudery, as they termed it, of the little Madonna, and the one by humorous sallies, the other by coaxing and caressing, strove to divert and soothe her discomfiture.

But Mrs. Lennard, as she still pressed the weeping child close to her, gravely reproved her for her foolishness.

"My dear Mary, this is silly," she said; "look up and dry your eyes, or I shall really feel displeased;" and in another moment she was obeyed.

The command of itself, coming from the lips of her beloved mother, would have been enough to ensure implicit obedience from the meek and loving child, without the threat which accompanied it; as it was, her tears with an effort were checked, and lifting up her head, from which her bonnet had fallen back, she upraised her eyes to meet those of her mother, with an air of beseeching penitence, truly lovely and touching.

"By Heaven, a Magdalene—a perfect Magdalene!" exclaimed Fitz Hugh, stepping back, and forgetting all but the artist, as he gazed admiringly on the picture before him.

"Poor little Mary, a Magdalene!" said Mrs. Clareville, laughing affectedly. "Oh, Mr. Fitz Hugh, you should have at least added that line,

'With naught remorse can claim, or virtue scorn.'

Taking up the idea suggested by Mrs. Clareville's quotation, Fitz Hugh—at first half jestingly, but in a tone and accent so well adapted to the soft paths of the beautiful lines—that even prejudiced I, held my breath to listen with irrepressible delight—as he stood before the child and her mother, repeated Byron's exquisite sonnet to Ginevra, beginning with,

"Thine eyes' blue tenderness, thy long fair hair,  
And the wan lustre of thy features," &c. &c.

What with the happy illustration, they so aptly afforded of her gentle child, and the plaintive melody of the lines themselves, I did not wonder to see Sybil's eyes glistening with tears.

"How beautiful!" she exclaimed, on their conclusion, "Thank you, Mr. Fitz Hugh!—Whose lines are they?"

"What, do you not know them," he answered, in a tone of some surprise.

"Not know them, my dear?" echoed Mrs. Clareville.

"I have read but little poetry," Sybil answered, looking as if ashamed of her ignorance, "but I am very fond of it."

"Well, my dear," returned Mrs. Clareville, "I must attend to that branch of your education; and amongst the books I have promised to lend you, I must send those stanzas and some other specimens of the sublime inspirations of that immortal poet, of whose marvellous productions I could not have believed there was a being in existence, possessed of a soul, who could own herself ignorant."

Sybil thanked her, and the next day I was in the drawing-room when Mrs. Clareville called. Being somewhat in haste to depart, and having waited some time in the hope of my withdrawing—whilst I, with an instinctive jealous pertinacity, persisted in remaining—she took advantage of my attention being apparently engaged with the children at the other end of the room, to take from her reticule a small elegantly bound volume, containing a selection of Byron's poems; and when I again looked that way, Sybil held the book in her hand, and was turning over the pages to find the "Ginevra," but pausing at other parts in the course of her search.

I heard Mrs. Clareville say—

"Do not think it is I who have been spoiling my present to you by those untidy pencil marks. Mr. Fitz Hugh, on my telling him last night it was for you, very audaciously seized the book, and after busying himself with his pencil, returned the volume to me in that condition. I do not know to what passages he is so particularly anxious to attract your attention, for I did not look. I conclude they are those which have either struck him as being particularly beautiful, or perhaps applicable to his own feelings. In that latter case, my dear," she continued, in a still lower tone, "I would advise you to keep the book for your own private inspection, as it might make mischief. But adieu," she exclaimed aloud; "as I cannot persuade you to come with me to the lecture—I really must be gone."

Sybil, when her friend's departure left us together, glanced first at the book she held in her hand, and then at me, with a dubious expression which seemed to say—

"Did you hear what she said—what did she mean?"

But contrary to her usual habit of expressing, without hesitation, every thought suggested to her mind, no words were uttered. After a moment's pause, however, without again opening the book, she gently placed it on the table.

"May I look at this?" I said, boldly.

With the most cordial readiness she replied, "Oh, pray do!"

I felt as if a weight were removed from my heart.

"Byron's poetry is considered very beautiful—is it not?" she continued, as I turned over her pages.

I did not answer; my attention at the moment was forcibly arrested by a deeply lined page upon which I had stumbled; and I was not aware, that looking over my shoulder, Sybil's

eyes were following mine, as I irresistibly perused the lines of the stanzas beginning with—

"Well! thou art happy, and I feel  
That I should thus be happy too;  
For still my heart regards thy weal  
Warmly, as it was wont to do."

The verses most conspicuously marked were the following:

"When late I saw thy favorite child,  
I thought my jealous heart would break;  
But when th' unconscious infant smiled,  
I kiss'd it for its mother's sake.

I kiss'd it, and repress'd my sighs,  
Its father in its face to see;  
But then it had its mother's eyes,  
And they were all to love and me!"

I suddenly closed the book and looked up; my eyes caught a view of Sybil's face in one crimson glow. I laid the volume upon the table. I knew not what exactly to say—how to act. I was truly wanting in moral courage, but God alone, who knowest the secrets of all hearts, can judge of what I suffered at that moment, or the bitter agonizing reflections of self-reproach, which have ever attended the remembrance of my weak irresolution.

How I wished that it was still my young pupil of Oakleigh Court, before whom I stood, as the authorized dictator of her actions and movements; for in that case, without hesitation, I should have ordered the treacherously conveyed poison—into which the contents of the volume had been converted—to be immediately sent back with scorn, to its purveyor.

But as it was, I stood in the presence of a dignified wife and mother, towards whom it might be considered an indignity—nay even an indelicacy, to advance my suggestions on the subject. At least, thus I endeavored to temporise with the matter, in order to reconcile to my conscience, the puerile conduct I was pursuing. Truly the straight path of life is alone the safe one, for it is the only sure road to peace; every other, after all its windings and turnings, infallibly leads down to the chambers of death. And woe is me! whilst with an aching heart, I pursue my task of inditing these memoirs, I could bitterly cry, "Oh that my head were waters, and mine eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night for the slain of the daughter of my people!"

But to proceed—I merely said with a forced smile,

"I do not know, my dear Sybil, what your mother would say, to find us thus engaged."

"I wish Mrs. Clareville had not brought the book then if it is objectionable," she answered hastily; "I will take it and put it away; perhaps Albert would not like me to have accepted it, and it might offend Mrs. Clareville were I obliged to return it."

This was not as I would have wished, but I forced myself to be content.

I believe the book was locked up, and I heard no more about it, nor of her who had rendered it in my sight so objectionable, during the short remainder of our stay in town; for in a few days we had left behind us—I could have imagined—all the spirits of evil, both from within and without, as we approached our earthly paradise, Llewellyn.



## CHAPTER XXVI.

"There are in this loud stunning tide  
Of human care and crime,  
With whom the melodies abide  
Of th' everlasting chime;  
Who carry music in their heart  
Through dusty lane and wrangling mart,  
Plying their daily task with busier feet,  
Because their secret souls, a holy strain repeat."

KEBLE.

AND amongst this blessed number, truly might Albert Lennard have been ranked. It would have appeared a subject of regret to behold a lovely soul like his drawn into the engrossing vortex of public life, but for the rare sight it afforded, of a being, skimming along that "stunning tide" of ambition and strife, as unscathed as the three children in holy writ, are said to have passed through the burning fiery furnace.

I have not paused to expatiate much, on this subject, or to illustrate the domestic felicity, which gleamed as brightly—perhaps more conspicuously, on the Lennards' life in London, than even in the uninterrupted peace of beautiful Llewellyn; for, as that all but inspired poet says,

"Love's a flower, that will not  
For lack of leafy screen

\* \* \*

Then be ye sure that love can bless  
Even in this crowded loneliness,  
Where ever-moving myriads seem to say,  
Go—though art nought to us, nor we to thee—away!"

Who that had seen Albert return,

"In such brief rest, as thronging cares afford,"

to the bosom of his family, might not have fancied he came from the shades of peace and love, and holy joy, rather than from the rude glare and stare of the haunts of pride and ambition. But,

"Oh, if even on Babel shine,  
Such gleams of Paradise,"

how resplendent were their brilliancy, on this our return to our Llewellyn Paradise, when that dear being, glad as a bird restored to liberty, poured forth in a full and uninterrupted flow, the treasures of his heart's warm affection, upon his beloved ones, and thought of nought—cared for nought—on earth, but contributing to their happiness!

That nothing might be wanting to complete their sum of perfect felicity, the little Sybil was sent for; and the grand parents—who seemed fearful of losing their hold upon the little cherished floweret, they had stolen from the parent stem and engrafted so tenderly on their own hearts—brought her to Llewellyn soon after our arrival.

Proud were they, poor souls, to present their charge to us! Mrs. Devereux never losing any opportunity of drawing our attention to the beautiful, noble looks, and fine grown figure of the child, as she sported by the side of her fairer and more delicately formed sister.

"And oh! most like a regal child wert thou,  
An eye of resolute and successful scheming;  
Fair shoulders—curling lip and dauntless brow!"

And did she not owe some of this superiority to the Oakleigh sojourn!—the triumphant tone

and look of the grandmother seemed to say, as also that noble, free spirit—for so the good lady denominated that, which in her own daughter would have been looked upon with dismay, as indications of a turbulent disposition. But now quite otherwise did Mrs. Devereux consider the characteristic difference between Sybil and her gentle sister Mary.

"Because a haughtier spirit swelled thy breast,  
And thou didst seek to rule and sway the others;  
Mingling with every playful infant while,  
A mimic majesty that made us smile."

Yes, that child was, even then, a strangely interesting creature, notwithstanding all the little naughtinesses engendered by Mrs. Devereux's injudicious management. A child of Sybil and Albert Lennard, could not fail to inherit amiability of temper, and this in a great measure counteracted and preserved her from those effects of over-indulgence, so apt to render the object of its influence disagreeable to all, save the infatuated spoilers.

Mrs. Devereux signified her request, on her arrival at Llewellyn, that the plan she had adopted to keep little Sybil's bodily and mental system in a healthy state of tranquility, might not be broken into during her stay there. She affirmed, that it was most injurious to the child to be excited by contradiction; and excepting by the nurse, Mrs. Armstrong—between whom and the spoilt beauty no friendly terms had ever existed—there seemed little danger of the Grandmamma's order being disobeyed.

The dear little playmates yielded with sweet cheerfulness to the imperious sway of their young sister, and Sybil's striking likeness to her mother, was of itself a sufficient cause to render her lovely and pleasant in her father's eyes, added to the natural tender love he felt for all his children.

Mrs. Lennard testified towards her strange daughter equal indulgence—expressed as much admiration of her beauty, but I never fancied that in reality the heart of the young mother yearned with quite the same affection towards the Grandmother's darling, as to her own children; nor was it indeed unnatural that the devoted affection of little Mary, and the winning, playful love of Bertie, should have rendered the spoilt child, with her self-absorbing *exigante* claims to attention, less attractive to her maternal feelings. And certainly there never existed such loving little beings as those two other children. Bertie, sweet boy! who, not all the devotion, amounting to idolatry with which he was regarded by his doting parents, nor the universal homage of all hearts—could spoil.

"I fear, Mamma," said Mrs. Lennard, the morning of her parents' departure from Llewellyn, "that you make little Sybil too happy, and that she will become quite independent of her family. I do not think she loves me much—do you, Sybil?" and she tenderly drew the child towards her.

This remark had been suggested by the excited spirits of the little girl at the prospect of the journey, and the anticipations of the various delights attendant on her return to Oakleigh; which seemed quite to do away with any

demonstration of concern at the consequent separation from her family.

"Have no such fear, my daughter," was the reply of Mrs. Devereux; "no child of yours will lose, under my guardianship, the proper consideration she owes to her own parents. As long as a mother remains irreproachable in thought, word, and deed, she need never fear the loss of the affection and respect of her child. Little Sybil, be assured, will ever value her mother according to her deserts."

In pronouncing these words, Mrs. Devereux looked proudly, triumphantly, towards the daughter she thus addressed, whose cheek gradually suffused with a crimson flush, as she hastily stooped to bestow a parting embrace on her young Sybil—for the moment of separation had arrived. It was a long, tearful embrace on the mother's part, and the child, when released from her arms, turned her large dark eyes, with an inquiring gaze, upon her face.

"Let me kiss Mamma again!" she whispered to her father, who then took the little girl into his arms to carry her to the carriage.

Pleased with this display of feeling, Mr. Lennard paused, and again the mother and child were clasped in a tender embrace.

"Why did Sybil blush?" I thought, on observing this sign of emotion, called forth by the confident praise of her mother—for my Argus eyes had easily discerned that it was not the blush of mere modesty, but rather of painful consciousness. What could call it forth? What could conscience have whispered in Sybil's inmost heart?

I went to seek her in her private sitting-room that same afternoon—for Mr. Lennard had been called away by business to a distance from home, and I knew she was not fond of being alone; especially, did I imagine, she would require companionship after the blank created by the departure of the morning. On my entrance she started from the half-reclining position on the sofa, with heightened color and somewhat confused expression, but on seeing it was me, she recovered her composure, and smiled her welcome.

She smiled, but with—I thought—an absent air, and though she began to converse, there was a languid dreaminess of eye and abstracted look, which puzzled me to behold. After conversing some time I offered to read aloud, and on Mrs. Lennard's acceding to the proposition—though with some indifference—I asked whether I should proceed with the book which had engaged her attention on my entrance—she still held it, but half concealed within the folds of her dress.

"No," was her hesitating reply; "it was nothing particularly interesting—she had found it in the library, and had taken it up merely to look over."

"What is it?" I inquired. The book was given into my hands, but with evident reluctance. I glanced over the open page—it was a volume of Rousseau's *Eloisa*.

I had never read this work, nor indeed any of the productions of this celebrated author,

but I knew what was the tendency of his writings, and that he was one—

"Who threw enchantment over passion—who knew, how to make madness beautiful, and cast  
O'er erring deeds and thoughts, a heavenly hue  
Of words, like sunbeams dazzling, as they past  
The eyes which o'er them, shed tears feelingly fast."

And I was certain it must be meat too strong for one so little experienced in such mental food! She, to whom works of imagination had, even since her marriage, been dealt so sparingly—her reading restricted to the purest and most select of authors!

"Do you like this book, my dear Mrs. Lennard?" I said, as a preparation for expressing my thoughts on the subject.

"I have heard it considered very beautiful," was her answer.

"Ah! dear Sybil," I exclaimed, "that which is often very beautiful is not always good."

"So it appears," she answered, somewhat pettishly; "or rather, everything most beautiful seems to me to be denounced as evil."

"Well!" I continued, "you had better ask what are Mr. Lennard's ideas upon the subject of this author. I will not presume to give any decided opinion on what I have not read. I only speak from my knowledge of the general repute and the tendency of the works in question. But consult your husband, dearest, before you proceed farther with it, I entreat."

"Oh, no, Mademoiselle!" she exclaimed, coloring with alarm. "Albert, perhaps, had better not know anything about it; for, to tell you the truth, it was hearing Mrs. Clareville and Hardress, converse about Rousseau's works and recommend them to my perusal, that induced me, when I saw the volumes in the library, to take them out to read—though really I can detect nothing very pernicious in any part I have looked over as yet."

"And this is the third volume," I said.

"Yes," was the hasty answer, "I read the two first before Mamma came, and this afternoon, to amuse myself, I went on with the third. But, dear Felicie, do not mention it to Albert, and I will read no more."

I felt more concerned at this wish than even at the act which had given rise to it. I was not then aware that "Do not tell your husband!" was a phrase which had of late become but too familiar to Sybil's ear. Already, alas! she had begun to taste the sweetness "of bread eaten in secret." She had waited but the departure of her parent (whose presence had imposed for a time an awed restriction upon such proceedings,) to return with avidity to those "stolen waters" of delight!

I would fain have inquired whether the subject of her present perusal was the first of this class she had read, for I knew that a selection of Rousseau's works, with those of Madame de Stael, and other writers of that *calibre* occupied the shelves of a corner of the library; and now I remembered having often of late found Sybil alone in that apartment on any occasional absences of her husband "looking over the books," as she expressed herself; and having also remarked symptoms in her countenance



and manner similar to those with which my attention had been attracted in the present instance.

I do not think that Sybil ever had a very decided taste for grave reading—the only kind of literature allowed when under the authority of Mrs. Devereux; nor had I been surprised, that when such works as Sir Walter Scott's were put into her hands by Albert himself, their perusal should have excited her most intense delight and interest—we had read them together during the long winter evenings. The effect, however, which the perusal of these beautiful fictions produced on Mrs. Lennard, was healthy—improving to her taste in that species of literature—amusing the mind without enervating it—far different from the influence which of late had been gathering round her senses, springing, I felt convinced, from the pernicious nature of her present studies. A listless, desultory demeanor now often pervaded her manner, which seemed to tincture all her pursuits. Mrs. Devereux, if during her visit she had observed this, attributed her daughter's occasional abstraction to absorption in her domestic avocations—to her devotion to her husband and children—and therefore found no fault. But I now felt uncomfortable as I remembered these symptoms of pre-occupation; and how doubly was I alarmed since the names of those two persons had passed her lips—from whose suggestions she had been instigated to her present course of reading—persons against whom I entertained so strong a prejudice!

I would therefore fain have discovered in what degree the mischief had progressed, but Sybil, before I could make the meditated inquiry, requested, in a tone slightly tinged with impatience, that I would read to her as I had proposed; and rising, she took up a book which lay near and gave it to me for that purpose. I commenced; it was the memoir of a good and learned man. The sentiments breathed forth in the letters and diary, in every line, gave indications of a mind exalted by genius—a heart swelling with every feeling of humanity, but “restrained and kept low”—purified and sanctified by higher wisdom—by heavenly affections. A soothing, healthful antidote it afforded—a contrast truly to one who had lately studied works emanating from a heart and mind abased and distermpered by grovelling sensualism—by morbid, sickly passion; those feelings which truly influenced most of the writings of Rousseau! I trusted it failed not in producing an effect. At first indeed I seemed only to be reading Mrs. Lennard into the dreamy slumber of the imagination, which her countenance on my entrance had bespoken, but her dormant thoughts at length became attracted by some striking passage which probably startled her fancy into attention. I beheld her expression gradually regain its wonted character—that strange mist disperse, and the sun of bright and calm animation once more shone there undimmed.

I saw Sybil, on her husband's return, meet him with her children, with all her natural, calm, and innocent gayety beaming in her coun-

tenance, and I was ready to smile at the suspicious misgivings which had visited my mind

## CHAPTER XXVII.

They were in sooth a most enchanting train,  
Ev'n feigning virtue—skilful to unite  
With evil, good—and strew with pleasure, pain.  
\* \* \* \* \*  
Entangled deep in its enchanting snares  
The listening heart forgot all duties and all cares.  
THOMPSON.

MY DEAR SYBIL,—

I am on a visit to a friend at——, and purpose, if agreeable to the inhabitants of Llewellyn Castle, to pause there on my way home, three days hence, both for the sake of seeing my much-loved relatives, and to obtain a sight of the far-famed beauties of their country abode. May I come, my dear cousin? and a still bolder request I have to crave—may I bring a friend I have accidentally met in these parts?

Your very affectionate,  
EMILY CLAREVILLE.

The request was granted. How could it well have been refused, however little agreeable to the master of Llewellyn! Mrs. Clareville arrived, and with her—Hardress Fitz Hugh!

“What impertinence!” was my inward exclamation, when recovered from my startled surprise—nay, consternation at the sight; for I had stood on the steps, with Sybil and the children, to greet the visitors when the carriage appeared in sight, winding through the wildly, beautiful approach; and before it stopped at the Castle door, we had recognized the companion of Mrs. Clareville.

All acknowledged the recognition in silence, and with altered countenances, save little Bertie, who clapped his hands, exclaiming, “It is the funny gentleman!”

Mary instinctively pressed close to my side, and Mrs. Lennard—I knew not whether it were pleasure or regret which called forth her heightened color, but I know she looked most beautiful as she stepped forward to receive her guests. My countenance, if observed, might have afforded an index to my inner feelings—but who *did* observe it, or what availed my feelings on the subject? When Mr. Lennard came forward to receive this unbidden guest, with no manifestation of dismay or displeasure, but with the most perfect, calm civility of bearing—I felt almost provoked with him for the countenance he thus seemed to give, to a circumstance which I could not but deem an unwarrantable intrusion.

I, however, believe it was really a satisfaction to his generous, noble soul to be able to show hospitality to a rival—one against whom perhaps his heart could not conceal from his conscience that he was certainly strongly prejudiced.

The guests were to stay till the day after the following. It seemed very strange to be once more under the same roof with Hardress Fitz Hugh! It struck me that he was not in his greatest force that first evening; on the con-

trary, rather subdued and constrained in his bearing—his powers of conversation and agreeability evidently forced. Perhaps his spirit was galled by the obligation he felt himself incurring, by the generous manner the rites of hospitality were conferred upon him by the man he had ever hated. But why then had he come to demand them? If he did hate Albert Lennard—and for the *one reason* I could not but suspect—I was malicious enough to feel some satisfaction in the idea that it must be worm-wood to his jealousy to look thus closely upon the felicity of which his rival was so fully possessed.

My thoughts instinctively turned to Milton's delineation of the view of the Evil One, of the bliss of the inhabitants of Paradise, and the sentiments thereby inspired in his breast—

"Sight hateful! sight tormenting!"

Why then come to gaze upon it?

His lovely hostess, with all courteous sweetness, did the honors to her guests, but without producing the effect of dispersing the gloom and constraint which shrouded the brow of Fitz Hugh and tinctured his whole demeanor. No, rather it seemed to increase them.

Mrs. Clareville in vain exerted her endeavors to draw him out—it would not do—the lion would not come forth at her pleasure.

But the next morning it was different; at least if I could judge by Sybil's countenance as she passed the school-room window, equipped for the exploring expedition on which the party was setting forth; for her face was radiant with smiles of enjoyment as she conversed with Fitz Hugh, who walked by her side—thus making it evident that she now found her companion more disposed to make himself agreeable than on the previous evening. Mrs. Clareville and Albert preceded them at a short distance.

A January day is not by its length or geniality very well suited for exploring the beauties of a country seat; but the present was made the most of, and the weather was bright and dry.

Albert returned alone at the children's dinner hour to write some letters, and he proposed that I should go with the young ones to meet their mother and her friends in the grounds. The party, he said, had preferred remaining without, to returning to luncheon—an interruption which would have cut up the day.

We went, and directed by a gardener, without difficulty discovered the wanderers. On a rustic bridge in a bosquet—whose dark leaves of laurel, evergreen, and scarlet berries shining in the sun, caused the eye almost to forget the barren and ungenial season of the year, stood Sybil Lennard and Hardress Fitz Hugh, gazing down on the foaming, dashing cataract beneath. Mrs. Clareville advanced to meet us, looking, it must be confessed, rather unromantically chilly.

"Oh, you are just come too late, Mademoiselle!" she exclaimed, "we have been hearing such a treat of poetical oratory from Mr. Fitz Hugh."

"Was it his own?" I enquired.

"Oh, no!" she replied, "the glorious gifts of

poetry and painting are seldom united in one human being; that would indeed be making a mortal approach too near to divinity. Oh, no!—but the loveliness of this place suggested the *Clarens* of Rousseau to his lively imagination. 'Clarens, sweet Clarens! birth-place of deep love!' and he has been treating us to those passages in which Lord Byron has immortalized that heavenly spot."

"Indeed!" I answered, shortly.

I knew that beautiful stanza of *Childe Harold*—Albert had read the canto to us not long before, but the words, which from his lips had flowed like pure, sweet waters—lovely and harmless—I felt might be turned into poison, when issuing from those of that man, who was still leaning over the bridge, mingling his voice with the sounds of the rushing waters. Perhaps the name of Rousseau had awakened unpleasant associations in my mind—and when the pair now turned towards us I could have fancied "Wild Rousseau" himself stood before me in the person of the Irishman—so completely did "passion's essence" light up his countenance at the moment!—The wild romance of the spot—the deep, eloquent pathos of the words which he had been reciting, probably aided the hotly kindling fire in his breast!

Sybil turned with calm gayety to greet her children, and we all strolled on together; the air and exercise of the morning had excited Mrs. Lennard's spirits to more than their usual redundancy.

"Mr. Fitz Hugh has been advising me to remain here for ever!" she exclaimed to Mrs. Clareville; "is not that complimentary?"

"Disinterested! you mean, Mrs. Lennard," Fitz Hugh interposed in a low tone. "No, the glittering throng is not the place where I would meet *you*, lady."

"Why not?" Sybil enquired hastily.

"For many reasons," he answered significantly.

Sybil looked mystified.

They walked on—Hardress seemed to continue in earnest converse, but by the time we rejoined them, the discourse had apparently begun to flag, and Sybil, I fancied, looked more thoughtful—Fitz Hugh gloomy.

"Ah! you are returned!" said Mr. Lennard to me, as I met him coming forth from his study, soon after our arrival.

"Yes," I answered, "we have been in some little time. Mrs. Lennard and Mr. Fitz Hugh are in the library; Mrs. Clareville, being somewhat fatigued, has retired to her room."

"I am going to the library, and will relieve Sybil, who perhaps will not be sorry to follow Mrs. Clareville's example," he replied, and I accompanied him thither, to bring away the children, whom I had sent there.

It was dusk, but a bright fire was burning in the hearth. The brilliant glow revealed clearly the form of Sybil, seated on one side, who looked up at Bertie, standing on the chair behind her—his arms encircling her neck. Mary was on the ground at her feet, her little fair head resting against her mother's knee.

On an arm-chair opposite, reclined Fitz Hugh—his head thrown back! He scarcely moved



when we entered, till Albert stood close beside him, and even then, as if with reluctance, he raised himself, and turning towards Mr. Lennard, said, with the utmost *sang froid*—

"Excuse my absorption Mr. Lennard! an artist has seldom such a group as this, presented to him as a study."

"I hope you are none of you fatigued by your long ramble," Mr. Lennard somewhat coldly rejoined.

"I think Mr. Fitz Hugh is a little tired," said Sybil, with an arch smile; "at least we have all been beseeching him to tell us a story, but in vain, and of course he can only plead fatigue as an excuse for such ungallant conduct."

"Some other time you must command my poor attempts to amuse your children, Mrs. Lennard," said Fitz Hugh, with that constrained manner, which he now and then, with such strange abruptness, assumed during his visit. "There are occasions when we feel, that the most trivial circumstance—even a nursery tale, may awaken thoughts and feelings of the past, with an intensity, too thrilling to be lightly provoked," and he moved away uneasily.

"Well, my dear Sybil, I think you and your son and daughter, have tormented Mr. Fitz Hugh sufficiently; we will therefore leave him for a little repose before dinner," said Albert. And Sybil exclaiming with playful pertinacity—

"Well, Mr. Fitz Hugh, we shall not let you off another time, shall we, Bertie?" placed her arm within that of her husband, and with the children they repaired, as was ever their wont at that hour, to spend a cheerful hour together in her dressing room. The next day the two guests departed.

A few days after, Mr. Lennard entered the apartment in which I was sitting with his lady, and throwing some letters on the table, exclaimed—

"There Sybil—I have been providing some gaiety for you. I have written to invite these people here."

Sybil lifted up her eyes doubtfully to her husband's face.

"Dear Albert," she said, "I thought you did not wish for any company just now; you said the other day—"

"Yes, Sybil, because in my own perfect contentment at being freed from the trammels of our London life, and restored to the enjoyment of which I was there deprived—the uninterrupted society of my wife and children! I forgot that a London lady might find six months of purely domestic life somewhat flat."

"Dear Albert, you cannot imagine that I wish for company?"

"Well, I hardly know what to think about it, Sybil! These few last days, have seemed to hang rather heavily on your hands. I could not endure the idea of your being surfeited of Llewellyn, therefore I wish the last part of your sojourn here to be made as agreeable to you as possible."

"Made agreeable to me! Oh, Albert!" and Sybil's eyes filled with tears; "can you imagine that I require any one but you, to render Llewellyn agreeable to me?"

"I trust not, my darling!"—and the look of

affection Albert turned upon his wife, I shall never forget.

"Well, put these letters in the fire!" continued Sybil; "I will have no one to divide my thoughts and time from you, whilst I am here. Would that we could stay at Llewellyn for ever!"

Albert repeated her words, in a tone of assumed playfulness, but which his earnest expression of countenance seemed to belie.

"Whilst I am here!"

"Those words!—were they not ominous?"

"Mr. Fitz Hugh advised me never to leave my beautiful home," said Sybil, laughing and coloring; "he is a very strange person."

"What can induce her to bring in that man's name at such a moment!" was my inward provoked ejaculation.

"Mr. Fitz Hugh indeed!" Albert calmly replied; "what could have led to such considerate advice on the part of Mr. Fitz Hugh?"

"What led to it, Albert!—It would be a very difficult matter to trace to its source everything that Mr. Fitz Hugh says. What an unaccountable creature he is!—never two minutes together in the same mood; grave—gay—animated, and morose!"

"A very strange man, Sybil, most certainly!" Mr. Lennard replied; and after a short pause he added, "I wonder whether he will ever marry!"

"I do not know," Sybil answered, blushing; "for he told me when he was here, he should never marry, until he found some one exactly like me."

Would that such openness as this, had pervaded every point of Sybil's conduct at this period!

I rejoiced, when at her earnest entreaties, Albert suffered the invitations to be cancelled. For his own sake it was better, for his bodily frame, and mind of such sensitive delicacy, did indeed require the relaxation of privacy, after the unceasing excitement, and harassing cares, surrounding him all the past spring and summer.

And on Sybil's account, I also rejoiced that this little scene had occurred. The same symptoms which had given rise to her husband's anxiety to provide for her amusement, had much troubled me—namely, her evident lassitude and *ennui*, the week after the departure of Mrs. Clareville and Fitz Hugh. I knew that Mr. Lennard always attributed such like little defects in his wife's mental health, to the peculiarity of her education, which, even when a boy, he had the good judgment to discern and deplore. I was glad therefore that this weakness was not to be encouraged by the new fuel to excitement, which company would have afforded.

Alas! how misjudging I was! But I little knew that fuel of a far more dangerous nature had been supplied, to whose pernicious influence, the quiet seclusion of the next month would only prove too favorable.

As regarded her husband, Mrs. Lennard with her natural amiability and solicitude for his happiness, and good opinion, was all that he could desire—cheerful and affectionate, when in his society; but I did not think that my companionship was sought for, with her former

pleasure. She seemed less averse to solitude, and in her husband's occasional absences from home, and in-door occupations, she would retire to her dressing-room, often remain alone for hours, and then rejoin me with a flushed face and dreamy eyes.

I knew that the pernicious collection of the library was shut out from her, for on seeing that the baneful volumes had been returned to the shelf which contained all the works of that description, I had taken possession of the key of the door, with which their receptacle was furnished. But alas,

"The snake crawls within your door,  
And leaves the venom which was not before."

And so that being, who had lately darkened the doors of Llewellyn, had taken care to leave behind, poison deadlier than the serpent can employ, for the destruction of the luckless victim—poison for the mind—that venom which the very talents his creator has bestowed upon him for good, man perverts, to the injury and ruin of his fellows—the offending of those "little ones," whose senses may not yet be sufficiently exercised or enlightened, to discern good from evil—"Better indeed, that a millstone were hanged about the neck," than thus offend.

*French novels*—exciting poetry—questionable works of imagination—dread sounds!—How many a soul has been blighted by their poison—beneath their influence how many a heart, once pure and spotless, is "tainted with festering sore disease."

Oh, what do they merit, from whose pens works of evil tendency have proceeded—whose will has sent forth these noxious draughts to do their unrighteous deeds? On that day which will summon us all to the bar of eternal justice, will not the perverters of talent, equally with those who have misused wealth or power, "call in vain on the mountains to fall on them, or the hills to cover them."

## CHAPTER XXVIII.

The tempest of the heart, the evil war  
Of fiery passions, is fast gathering  
O'er that bright creature's head. L. E. L.

Love! summer flower, how soon thou art decayed!  
Opening amid a paradise of sweets,  
Dying with withered leaves and cankered stem!

The trusting heart which thou hast made  
So green—so lovely, for thy dwelling place  
Left but a desolation.

Then the serpents wake  
Hopes that make  
Fears' burning arrows—lingering jealousy,  
And last worse poison of thy cup—neglect. IDID.

In London again!—The Lennards were drawn into an enlarged circle of gaiety, into which Sybil at first entered, with all her former zest and delight.

It was about the middle of the season, that this spirit seemed in some degree to cool.

Albert was more pleased than otherwise at the change. He did not wish his wife should become too fond of dissipation, and it appeared to him as though her first extreme elation, occasioned by a life so new, was but the spark-

ling effervescence of youthful spirits, now so gradually subsiding into calm and temperate enjoyment. I should also have rejoiced, had I not possessed more leisure, to remark other changes in Sybil, which entirely counterbalanced the satisfaction I might otherwise have experienced. These changes consisted in less equanimity of temper and spirits; and also—what caused me the most painful feelings—an increasing coolness in her manner towards myself. I remember well the day from which I particularly dated this latter sign of alteration.

Mr. Devereux was staying with us at the time, and one afternoon, when I was leaving the house with the children, to walk in the Park, who should we meet coming up the steps but Mr. Fitz Hugh?

I had not seen him before since our arrival in London, he having as yet merely left a card at the door;—nor had any further intercourse been encouraged by Albert, though in public the Lennards often met him, I believe. On this occasion, however, after speaking to the children and me, I heard him ask for Mr. Devereux, and as we left the house, he entered it.

Sybil's carriage was then at the door.—In an hour and a half we returned, and there it was still—the impatient horses and weary coachman waiting in vain for their fair lady.

As we ascended the staircase, the drawing room door opened, and Mr. Fitz Hugh issued forth. I followed the children as they ran into the apartment, and there we found Mrs. Lennard in her carriage dress—alone.

"Here I am," she said, "not yet gone out, and I was to have called for Mrs. Clareville at three!"

"Mr. Fitz Hugh has paid you a long visit," was my rejoinder.

"Yes!" she answered hurriedly, "he has indeed. He came to see my father, who you know was an intimate friend of Lord Castle-rosse, his uncle—and I expected Papa home every minute."

So then, this whole hour and a half the man had presumed to remain on a *tele a tele* visit with Sybil!

I looked very grave and she perceived it, for she said, laughing,

"Oh, I see, Mademoiselle, you are quite scandalized—but really I had not the slightest idea that Mr. Fitz Hugh's visit had been of so lengthened a period, or I should have pleaded my engagement with Mrs. Clareville—indeed I did once mention it. But the fact is, if I had enforced the point, I should have been obliged to have acceded to this proposal, that I should take him in my carriage a part of the way—and I suppose, Mademoiselle, you would have considered that, even a still more heinous proceeding." She said this in a jesting tone of voice. I answered gravely:

"Yes, most certainly, my dear Mrs. Lennard, because I am aware it would have been a proceeding quite out of accordance with your husband's ideas of propriety and decorum."

She colored—then exclaimed—

"Upon my word, Mademoiselle, I cannot see that there could be any harm in so doing." *Hon soit qui mal y pense*, as Mrs. Clareville said



when speaking of —" But she then paused abruptly, and in a moment continued, "Ah! I forgot! It is of no use quoting Mrs. Clareville to you—prejudiced as you are against her, as indeed you are against all *my friends*."

"My dear Sybil," I said, "excuse your old governess, for once again speaking to you with the same freedom she was wont to do, in the days of your childhood. Trust not too much in the maxim you have just quoted; it would do well enough if *all* were as pure in heart as yourself—but that very ignorance of the evil around you, may only make it the more dangerous precedent."

"Thank you, Felicie!" replied Mrs. Lennard, rising, and gathering the folds of her shawl round her graceful form—her head thrown back with greater stateliness than ever! Such a model of all that was dignified she looked, as she thus stood before me, that again I almost thought my jealous caution and misgivings had been superfluous.

"Well, I suppose I must be off now, if I am to go out at all to-day," she added, and she departed to drive with Mrs. Clareville. A day now seldom passed without some meeting of the kind between Sybil and that lady.

"I am very sorry I was not at home to see Fitz Hugh to-day," I heard Mr. Devereux remark in the evening; "I should like to hear something of my old friend, Castlerosse."

"I will ask him to dinner, if you particularly wish to meet him," Albert replied, "although I cannot say he is a man I have any desire to encourage as an intimate in my house; his private history is not of the most respectable character, if report speaks true." And lowering his voice, Mr. Lennard conversed with his father-in-law for some time, whilst Sybil arose abruptly, went to the piano, and swept the chords of a brilliant Fantasia.

Towards the close of the season, Mrs. Lennard and I had a delightful treat—we obtained tickets to admit us into the visitors' gallery of the House of Commons.

Never can I forget the impression produced upon my feelings, by this first specimen I had witnessed of Mr. Lennard's public speaking.

A question of deep interest was in agitation, and seraphic fire seemed to light up his countenance as he delivered his sentiments. Then the thrilling melody of his voice, now elevated, clear and symphonious, in the eagerness of debate—now sinking into the softest cadence of pathos—now slightly faltering, as his eyes accidentally turned in our direction, evidently reminded, that there was one present, drinking in his every accent; one whose meed of praise was dearer to his heart, than all the applause, and fame, and glory, which successful eloquence must ever command! No wonder that the tears fell fast and thick from the eyes of the wife!

"Dear Albert!" I heard her murmur, and she pressed my hand in acknowledgment of the sympathy my glistening eyes testified, and still she retained it whilst another spoke.

But not the person I was anxious or rather curious to hear—no; he was more polite on

this occasion—knowing whose eyes would witness his appearance—to stand up in direct contrast with the stately form, just vanished from our sight. The short dry speech of an indifferent orator, which succeeded that of Albert's, had concluded ere the tears were dry on the long lashes of Sybil, who sat bending forward with her veil drawn back in her eagerness to catch every sound. At that moment suddenly arose the tall, wild form of Fitz Hugh.

But none of those characters now shone forth in his demeanor and address, described on his first appearance before the House. No! a second's pause, in which one glance flashed full in the direction of the gallery, and then—as if by some electric collision, conveyed by that glance, his overwhelming eloquence burst forth at once—fire indeed! for it quenched those drops, glittering on the eye-lashes of Mrs. Lennard, lighted up her face with a kindled glow, and burnt in the hand, contracted convulsively in mine, ere, abruptly it was withdrawn from my hold.

On leaving the House and repairing to the carriage, in which the children, with the nurse, came to meet us, we waited for a time as had been arranged, for the chance of Mr. Lennard being able to accompany us. A messenger, however, soon appeared, to say that he was detained, and that we must proceed without him. But before the carriage was suffered to depart, we were delayed by a member, who *had* managed to escape from amongst his brother commoners.

Hardress Fitz Hugh appeared just as we were about to drive off, and shook hands with Sybil.

"Well, I hope you have been amused, Mrs. Lennard," he exclaimed.

"Very much, indeed!" she replied, but looked as if she would rather have passed on; probably, I thought, because of my presence, and my well known dislike to Mr. Fitz Hugh. However, as he still stood there, she continued—"Your speech was splendid, Mr. Fitz Hugh!"

"Ah! your presence then must have inspired the eloquence of my tongue! But did you really like it?" he added, merely, I believe, as an excuse for prolonging the conversation.

"*Did I like it?*" Sybil exclaimed, with a bright smile and flash of her fine eyes, "indeed I did! but not half so much as your old history of Beauty and the Beast."

"Then you shall have it again! When shall I come and tell it to—these little people? Will you like to hear a fairy story, my pretty boy?" he said turning to Bertie. "Shall I come to-morrow, Mrs. Lennard?"

"Oh yes!" cried the child.

Fitz Hugh nodded his head, and stepping back, the carriage drove off.

And the man came!

It was late in the afternoon. Albert seldom returned from the House till seven. Sybil had not been out that day—she was not very well. The children were sent for immediately Mr. Fitz Hugh arrived. I sat for a time in perplexity and nervousness—was it my duty to follow them or not!

A few months back I should have done so without scruple, but now I felt with deep sorrow, that I had cause to doubt the nature of my reception from Sybil. Formerly she had never seemed to consider me in the position of a governess, either when alone or in company. I had never been in the habit of coming in and going out of her presence at my pleasure, without constraint, or the fear of being thought an intruder; and I have the consolation of being able to affirm with truth that I never presumed upon the privilege, but preserved the strict discretion so requisite in my situation.

But with pain I had perceived, for some time past that my society, especially when *tele-a-lele*, was evidently not so much enjoyed by Mrs. Lennard. But she was not now alone, and I would go—yes! however unwelcome might be my appearance. My love was as tender—my anxiety for the welfare of my beloved pupil, strong, vigilant as it had ever been—nay, much stronger. I too would go and hear—or interrupt the fairy tale. I also had heard it long ago, and liked not the remembrance. If my presence prevented its being again told—so much the better!

I went up stairs and entered the drawing-room. The story had commenced; nothing was heard but the murmuring of the voice of Hardress Fitz Hugh. He stopped short, and turned his head round to see who was the intruder, but on my quietly seating myself with my work, proceeded. There was nothing, however, now in the style of relation to remind one of the "Beauty and the Beast" of Oakleigh Court. With careless drollery rather than pathos he told the tale, and I could perceive that his spirit was not in the task. His back was turned to the seat I had chosen; he sat facing Mrs. Lennard and her children.

And there before me was the self same Sybil, who ten years before had listened to this fairy story in the cottage garden. My eyes irresistibly fastened themselves on her countenance, so forcibly was I struck at that moment, with the comparison suggested by my remembrance, of what she then had been to what she was now. The change had not been caused by any outward circumstance—not because now before me I beheld

"In a shadowy saloon  
On silken cushions half reclined."

a Sultana looking being, with her children, like two little guardian angels, seated at her feet. Nor was it the matured beauty of her features that riveted my gaze. It was rather the whole character of the face—the expression of the countenance. There I read an indescribable change, which ten months—not ten years—had sufficed to effect—a change which struck me thus strangely for the first time, and which pleased me not. Perhaps this very alteration increased her beauty. What could be more splendid than those eyes, so large, so languishingly dark—the long lashes now raised from the cheek of a varying hue, and then again so suddenly cast down? But fain would I have dispensed with this style of impassioned loveliness—fain would I have exchanged it for one

gleam of the free, open, steadfast "light of other days."

Never perhaps, save in that epitome of contumely penned by Lord Byron, was abuse poured in such venomous terms on a woman, as was lavished on the head of our poor governess by Hardress Fitz Hugh as he left Parklane and sought his own abode. Arrived there, the ire of his chafed spirit was spent upon the unfortunate victim, who now indeed—in the altered demeanor of him whose love had been her only hope—began to reap the true wages of iniquity.

And this day the nature of her punishment assumed a character far more difficult to endure, than even the harsh violence from which she had of late so often suffered in patient meekness—now she was greeted with taunting irony.

"Well, Mavourneen!" Fitz Hugh exclaimed in a sneering tone, suddenly turning round upon the girl, who sat at a little distance, envying the sad smile—the submissive look of the pictured Magdalene, which hung before her, mocking the unhappy original with her own features—bearing an expression of grief, indeed, but grief chastened and subdued, whilst hers was burning within her breast—a grief, wretched creature! for which there could be no cure—no balm—but the renewal of the unholy love which had blinded and bewildered her soul.

Where should she go if that love quite cast her off? She knew no Saviour now to whose feet to fly for refuge—the pure Virgin was her mother no more. Priestly aid had been laughed to scorn. She had been taught to set religion at nought; and what home—what friend would now receive her? A hopeless cast-away must she be on the face of the earth.

"Well, Mavourneen!" again repeated Fitz Hugh, "is this your gratitude? You have never thanked me for the indulgence I granted you last night. Now tell me, what do you think of her you so desired to behold?"

Norah sprung to her feet as if electrified, and stood—her bosom heaving—her hands pressed together convulsively.

"Say," he continued, "was her glance like the cold moon beams!—was her smile as passionless as that of the maiden in yonder picture?"

A shudder convulsed the frame of Norah, and a groan escaped her lips.

"Or was it not," he added, "like a glorious gleam, worth all the sunshine which lighted up the day?"

"Yes, Hardress," faltered the miserable girl, "true she is glorious in beauty—but—but she does not want your love—it would be her ruin—who should she love but the man who sat by her side—her wedded husband? Yes, Hardress, look not so fiercely on me, but keep your love for her whose ruin will be its loss. She will be your slave—she asks for nothing more—take your poor Norah no more, where to own her for yours, would be your shame, as it was at that dazzling place to which you sent me last night. A dream—a bewildering dream—now it seems! Oh! that music—



that dancing—the noise—the light—and more than all, that tall, Queen-like lady! How it made the heart of Norah ache as she sat all alone in that curtained closet! I could have shrunk down on the floor and died, but for the sake of living for another look—another kind word from Hardress, who once loved me—the poor Norah, who left father and mother, brother and sister—and all for the sake of that love!” She sank at his feet and wept.

Hardress bade her not disturb him by her whining; if she were weary of her present life, he would send her back to her Irish home.

“My home, Hardress!—my home would be the waters of Killarney!” cried Norah, starting up with a wild gleam flashing from her eyes. “The only home that would now take back Norah—cursed by father and mother—seorned by all her kin! There would be no home but those clear waters for the fallen Norah.”

“If that’s the sort of home you’re wishing for, Norah,” said Hardress, with a loud, taunting laugh, “you need not be going so far to seek it. You’ll find one quite as warm, and much nearer at hand, if that’s your taste, and where you’re likely to meet more company than in your blessed Killarney’s lake.”

“Where?” cried Norah in an eager tone. “Och!” she continued, “I know that broad bit of water in the place they call the Park, where you send me to walk sometimes with old Martha. Oh, yes, she did once tell me, that when the glittering sun went down, and the grand, rolling carriages, and prancing horses—carried the fine lords and ladies to their beautiful houses—to their music and dancing—their pleasures—and oftentimes, she said, to their sins—sins as foul as are committed by those poor wretches, who, having not riches to hide their guilt, are despised—looked upon as loathsome—vile—whilst the great ones, sinners though they be, are smiled upon—courted—admired!—Then, when all is dark and silent, many an unhappy creature, whom poverty, perchance ignorance, has driven to sin and misery, creeps to the bring of that wide pool, and there ends her shame, by plunging into its cold, mirky waters. Ah!” she added, with a shiver, “now in the broad, glaring light of the summer’s sun, it does look gay and glittering, but I have seen it in the dark November month (and it is then, they say, that so many go and drown themselves,) wrapped in the darkness of the damp, thick fog—the sun looking like a ball of red fire peeping through upon it.—O’chone! a cold, dreadful home it would indeed be, for the once blithe Norah—but good enough for such as she now is. \* Blessed Killarney, with its green isles and clear blue sky above, is far too fair a resting place for one like her—guilty, lost!”

And again she sat down, but at a distance from Hardress, in an attitude of the deepest dejection; and, in spite of his attempts—for he was a little softened by her pathetic accents—to rally her into spirits, the wretched girl continued during the rest of the time he remained at home, to sit in sullen silence, as if brooding over the dark thoughts her words had suggested.

## CHAPTER XXIX.

When we two parted,

To sever for years;  
Pale grew thy cheek and cold,  
Colder thy kiss;  
Truly that hour foretold  
Sorrow to this.  
The dew of the morning  
Sunk chill on my brow—  
It felt like the warning  
Of what I feel now.

BYRON.

SEPTEMBER found us still in London. Parliament sat late that year, and for a time after its prorogation, Mr. Lennard was detained by business connected with the Cabinet.

At the end of that period, I was one day informed by him that he had determined upon taking a house at Brighton for the next two months, previous to our returning to Llewellyn. He was not quite easy about Sybil; her spirits were not as good as usual—and, in fact, the doctor had recommended the bracing sea air for himself, as well as for his wife, during the autumn.

We had not yet quitted London, when a letter arrived from Oakleigh Court, containing a request that I might be spared during an unavoidable absence of Mr. Devereux, to pay a short visit to his lady—a proposal to which Mr. and Mrs. Lennard did not object.

I could therefore have no excuse for refusing to go, though God knows how instinctively my heart shrunk from the plan! In a week then I was to take my departure.

The evening after this arrangement was settled, Bertie came to ask me to repair to the dressing-room to speak about something connected with my journey. The little fellow, as he led me up stairs, descanted with great glee on the delightful fun they had been having with papa—how happy they had been! But Mamma, he said, had a head-ache, so now they were going to be quiet; and Mary was showing Papa how well she could read French.

On opening the door of the dressing-room, it seemed that a cloud had obscured the brightness of the scene the boy had depicted—at least it was so with regard to its occupants. The room itself, with the exquisite furniture, the soft crimson light, and cheerful fire, formed as perfect a picture of comfort as it ever exhibited at this hour before dinner. But Sybil, on whom my eyes first rested, sat upright on the sofa—her face flushed—her eyes cast down—shame and disquiet expressed in her whole demeanor.

With his back to the fire, stood Albert, holding a book in his hand. His face too had a heightened color, and bore an air of displeasure which very rarely had I witnessed on that calm, benignant countenance; whilst even little Mary sat on a low stool, looking dismayed and grieved—the tears struggling in her eyes: it was so novel a sight to see Papa angry with Mamma, and she dear child had been the innocent means of drawing forth this displeasure.

Being called upon to give her father a specimen of her progress in reading, she remembered having seen a French book fall from behind the sofa-pillow; into which she had peeped

as she replaced it, unobserved by her mother. She now took it up, carried it to her Papa, and began to read a passage.

"Very well, indeed, my little Mary; but what book have you got here?" exclaimed Mr. Lennard, and taking it from her hands, he carelessly cast his eyes over the title-page.

"Why certainly you have chosen rather a curious work for your perusal, little lady! Where did it come from, Sybil?" he added, and he looked up and beheld her face crimsoned with embarrassment. "The most poisonous—the most insidious production of the French authors—a book I never wished to see within my doors. I trust, Sybil, you have not been reading such a work of depravity."

She answered not, but sat, as I found her, in silent confusion. Albert, without noticing my entrance, again gave a hurried glance at the book.

Volume second, and a mark placed towards the close of it!

He stood for a moment, evidently much annoyed, and then said,

"Well, Sybil, my only consolation on this occasion, must rest upon those words of the Apostle—"To the pure, all things are pure"—and therefore trust, that to your mind the foul things written within this book, are nearly as harmless, as the passage little Mary has just read, appears to her innocent mind. But pray, dearest, send this dirt from the house directly—Dirt! I wish it were as innocuous—dirt may be washed away, but the pollutions with which such writings defile the mind, never! Upon my word, Sybil," he again resumed with great warmth, "if I did not feel quite convinced that your mind was purity itself—even after this single glance at such a venomous mixture, I could not regard you as the same uncontaminated being, which it has been my pride to consider my wife heretofore. As you value my peace, Sybil—your own interest here and hereafter, eschew every work of a questionable nature—French novels, in short all literature which admits of a doubt as to its purity."

Alas! alas! one single glance over infected pages—pollution!—what words for one to hear whose daily food of late had been those streams of insidious evil! Remembering Rousseau, I wondered not so much at the emotion of Mrs. Lennard during these animadversions of her husband—the death-like pallor succeeding the crimson hue which tinged her cheek! I fondly thought that the tender conscience writhed at the remembrance that this was *not* the first time her husband was deceived—she tacitly consenting to the deception; and perhaps her confusion was increased, by the presence of one conscious of her guiltiness in that respect.

To relieve his wife from the embarrassment this scene had caused, Mr. Lennard turned to speak to me, on the matter for which I had been summoned; but when this subject was exhausted, she had not rallied, but sat with the same gloom upon her countenance—so different from the Sybil, to whom one atoning word of love from her Albert, had ever been sufficient to disperse any little mist of distress or vexation, which some slight expression or look of

displeasure might have caused transiently to overcloud her cheerfulness. At any other time, long ere this, she would have been in his arms, all smiles, and anxious affection.

Mr. Lennard looked for a moment steadfastly at his wife, then approached her, saying with his own frank, sweet smile,

"Come, Sybil, cheer up, or I shall think those abominable books have really bewitched you—you are indeed not like yourself."

Sybil abruptly turned away her head, and I was electrified an instant after, by the sound of a deep sob, followed by a violent fit of hysterical weeping as she sunk down upon the sofa.

It is needless to describe all the tender endeavors of the husband to soothe and allay this paroxysm of emotion—so strange, so unexpected—though the difference for some time observable in Mrs. Lennard's spirits in some degree accounted for it. But when, for the next few days, this change of demeanor only became more apparent, why were we so blind as to fancy still, that mere bodily derangement could be the origin of

"The faltering speech, the look estranged,  
Voice, step, and life, and beauty changed!"

"Sybil, my darling, I must get you to Brighton without any further delay," Mr. Lennard said, only the day before the one fixed for my departure.

A forced smile was the only answer.

"I was thinking," Mr. Lennard continued, "how I should like to have our little Sybil with us; we should then, I think, be quite happy. The change from this confined, hot air—which I am sure, my dearest, has made you so unwell—will restore you to your usual spirits. I am fully determined that nothing shall ever tempt me in future to allow you and the dear children to remain so long in London. Now, the pure, exhilarating sea air will, I think, make us all mad with happiness—will it not, darling Sybil? And that dear child, would it not be delightful to have her with us! Shall I go with Mademoiselle and bring her back?" and he passed his arm round his wife, and gazed with earnest tenderness on her face.

"Yes, yes," she answered, hurriedly, averting her head as if to avoid the scrutiny. "I should like so much—so very much—to see her."

"Would you really, Sybil?" Albert again said.

"Really!" she repeated, rising, "what a strange question!—of course I should."

I left the room at this juncture, and suppose all was settled between them, for I heard, soon after, that I was to be accompanied into Somersetshire by Mr. Lennard.

There was an evident change in Sybil's mood after the arrangement of this plan. It seemed as though the prospect of some relief had removed from her mind an intolerable weight, which of late had weighed it down. Again she smiled—nay, "much and brightly smiled—"

"But 'twas a lustre—strange—unreal—wild!"

I thought.

Albert, however, saw naught, save the quick rebound of her elastic spirits, springing alone from the prospect of seeing her child.



The morning of our departure arrived, and Sybil, at an early hour, stood upon the stairs in her long white wrapper to see us depart.

Her image is now before me—her tall figure gliding about in the grey, murky light of that October morning—her face startling me by the pallor, which I fancied the shadow of that light imparted to it—the large eyes gleaming with such a strange, restless expression, whilst following her husband as he hurried about making the necessary preparations for starting.

An abstracted smile played on her lips as I stood and talked to her.—And then the long embrace in which her husband pressed her shivering form! Yes! and when my turn came to enfold her in my arms, I felt how like an icicle she was, and wondered not at Albert's words—

"My dearest Sybil, how very cold you are! Pray go to bed again directly. Now mind, darling, you do what you have promised me—Write to Lady Mordaunt, and be with her as much as possible."

A few more anxious, tender directions, and we had gone forth into the cold, damp air—a chilling weight was upon my heart and brow.

### CHAPTER XXX.

But how shall woman tell  
Of woman's shame, and not with tears? She fell

For she went on! forsook her home, her hearth,  
All pure affection, all sweet household mirth.

MRS. HEMANS.

THE temporary absence of her husband, had probably been hailed by the unfortunate Mrs. Lennard, as a relief from that infliction, the most intolerable to a guilt struck conscience—we mean, the confiding love and trust of one, whom that guilt does injure.

But none of this relief was afforded to her unhappy spirit; on the contrary, the restraint thus removed from her mind, seemed but to deprive it of its last ballast, and yield it powerless to the mad delirium, nursed in her breast by the tempter's art.

Restless and wandering, Sybil passed the remainder of the day; shunning the presence of all—not even suffering the children to approach her. London was now of course emptied of all visitors; even Mrs. Clareville was supposed to have left it, not having been seen in Park-lane for the last week. The papers too, a few days back, had announced Hardress Fitz Hugh's departure for Ireland; he having until this period remained in Town, and occasionally—since the last mentioned visit—called at the Lennards' house.

At the abode of Mrs. Clareville, however, Sybil had of late chiefly met that person; and indeed his visits to Mrs. Lennard had apparently been far from frequent, and for the most part had taken place in the presence of either her husband or her vigilant friend—the governess. Late in the afternoon of the day of Mr. Lennard's departure for Oakleigh, Mr. Fitz Hugh was announced; whether or not to the surprise of Sybil, she alone could tell.

It is not the aim of this narrative to pander to that most pernicious but prevalent tendency of the literature of these days,—that of presenting vice and sins of the most repellent nature, clothed in such refined garments, and appearing in positions of such deep and heart-stirring interest, that those who would once have shrunk from the contemplation of similar depravity with horror and disgust, when considering it in its naked hideousness, are now beguiled into the snare of gazing upon it—musing upon it—till the imagination is, as it were, fascinated—accustomed to dwell upon the theme. Its witchery glides into every sense; the brain, the heart, the passions are inflamed; that which was once thought evil, appears under a softened—an extenuated aspect.

We will not therefore seek to expose to the reader's view, softened by the silvery, misty veil, with which a warm imagination might invest them, the next few fatal days of the wretched Sybil's life. Shrouded in the dark mysterious cloud, which best befits shame and guilt, we will leave them, and pass on, as hastily as possible, to that dread crisis, on which, alas! the subject of these memoirs hangs, and which it is therefore our painful duty to record. Suffice it to say, that in that brief period, the victim of more than demon's art, suffered herself to be hurried wildly on to the brink of that most dreadful abyss, into which a woman can be precipitated.

It was the fifth day from her husband's departure, that hand-in-hand, her two innocent children softly entered the sleeping apartment, and found their mother, seated like a cold statue, and with so dread a look of despondency in her fixed eyes, that the terrified boy approaching close to her, gently shook her arm, gazing inquiringly into her averted face; and Mary exclaimed—

"Dear—good Mamma, speak to us; why will you sit here all alone! why will you not let us stay with you?"

"We are so dull without Mademoiselle," the boy continued.

No answer came.

"It was that naughty Mr. Fitz Hugh that made you cry yesterday; it is he that makes you so unhappy," proceeded Bertie.

"Papa will be at home, soon—will he not?" Mary ventured softly to enquire. "Oh! I wish he would come!"

The wretched woman started up and with a look almost of frenzy, stamped her foot upon the ground, exclaiming—

"Children, begone! Did I not tell you to approach me not? that I would be alone! You torture me. Go—go directly."

The frightened little ones crept away. They closed the bedroom door, and seated themselves upon the floor of the dressing-room into which it opened. Mary wept, whilst Bertie gazed into her face, with an enquiring air of blank astonishment.

Mrs. Lennard left not her room that day, nor suffered any of the servants to enter it. After the children's intrusion, she had locked both doors; and when food was brought, answered from within, saying that it should be taken

away—that she was not very well, and could not eat.

The children, except when called to their meals, remained in the dressing-room; Mary, listening to every sound—hoping—pining for a summons from her mother. Her little heart was nearly breaking at the change which had so suddenly taken place in that dear mother—a mother ever before, so fond—so tender! And the sweet child, who during every former indisposition of her loved parent, had been allowed to glide into the sick room—sit by her side—bathe her brow—watch her every wish—anticipate her every desire—was *now* to be thus banished from her presence, and with harshness too—her own kind, gentle mother! What could it all mean?

Poor little affectionate Mary! She tried to play with Bertie—to make him say his lessons, as she had been desired to do by Mademoiselle when Mamma was otherwise engaged—and Mamma had always been otherwise engaged since the governess's departure—but her heart was too heavy to succeed in either attempt. Even the boy—whose innocent mirth had occasionally broken the gloomy stillness—towards the close of the long, dull day, became depressed, and went and seated himself close to his sister, his little arm thrown round her neck. Mary then strove to cheer him—to speak to him in a subdued voice, of the joy their little sister's arrival would occasion—their happiness at seeing her again!

Nurse appeared to bring them their tea, which in Mademoiselle's absence, they had begged as a treat they might have there, and Mrs. Lennard suffered a cup to be taken to her by her maid, but through the outer door; that leading into the dressing-room she did not open.

As the maid (quite a new servant) put the tray upon the table—on which stood a bottle of camphor julep and lavender drops, of which Sybil had lately partaken in great quantities—Mrs. Lennard, without turning her face, to which she held her handkerchief, said that very likely she should go out that evening—to Mrs. Clareville's.

"Would she dress?" the woman inquired.

"Oh no!" her mistress answered with an impatient wave of the hand; and the maid left the room.

"Well, young lady and gentleman, I think you'll not be sorry to go to bed after your *pleasant* day!" said Nurse, entering the dressing-room at about seven o'clock. She spoke with some asperity, for the old lady was not a little offended at the perfect independence the children displayed, of her society.

"You had better go and bid your Mamma good night, and come up stairs," she continued. Mary looked wistfully at the dressing-room door, but Bertie put his mouth to the key-hole, and cried—"Mamma, open the door, and let us wish you good night."

There was a pause, and then Mrs. Lennard's step was heard, crossing the room; the door was unlocked, and in a low voice, she said, "Come in." The children waited for no second invitation—Bertie had soon bounded in, followed by Mary—as gladly, but more timidly.

Sybil again sat down—she suffered the little creatures to enfold her in their tiny arms—to press their lips to hers! as resistless was she as a marble statue. No return—no acknowledgment did she make—once only she pressed her burning brow against the head of one, whose face was buried in her bosom.

At length, the children, awed by her strange bearing left her, and slowly quitted the room.

Their departure seemed to break the icy trance, which had bound the wretched mother. Here eyes had been half closed during their presence, as if she dared not look upon them; but now with a wild, eager gaze, they were turned to watch their retreating footsteps.

"Bertie—Mary!" she gasped, as the door closed behind them.

They were gone from her—those spirits of purity—who, during that day of darkness, had at least been hovering near, like guardian angels, keeping alive the lingering struggle in her soul, between good and evil. With them, the last hope of peace and honor seemed to have taken flight; now she was alone—alone with her shame and guilt. Evil spirits whispered in her ear, that she was already lost—that she could not again look on her husband's face, and conceal her worthlessness. This thought was goading her on to the desperate plunge, which would hide her from his injured eyes. She would fly—the delirium of despair, prompted the fatal consummation of her crime.

Suffice it to say, that hastily attired in a walking dress, about nine o'clock that night, down the brightly lighted staircase, stole the miserable woman. With the dexterity of a sleep-walker, she undid the fastening of the hall door, and looked out upon the October night—wild—stormy! but not wilder than the gaze of her distended eyes, not more tempestuous than the reckless confusion within her breast! But as if her God would yet have stretched forth his hand to save an erring creature, in the war of those disturbed elements, seemed to be imparted the power, to make her pause and turn from the destruction to which she was thus madly rushing. The delicately nurtured woman, on whom the breezes of Heaven had never been permitted to blow too roughly, recoiled at the sight of the dark, stormy night; the gusty winds, mingled with drizzling rain, blowing full upon her face and brow, seemed in an instant to recal Sybil to her senses. All the dreadful reality of her position burst upon her—she trembled with horror and shrunk back.

It was, we have before said, about nine o'clock. With the instinct belonging to the delirium of moral, as well as of physical derangement, she had selected that hour for perpetrating her escape, knowing that the servants being all at supper, and consequently the Porter absent from his post in the hall, she would run little risk of being observed, or heard; and now for the same reason she might again steal back, and none would be cognizant of her attempt. She would remain and declare her guilt at the feet of that dear being, the remembrance of whose love seemed now rushing back into her mind.

"Waking up each long lulled image there!"



Any alternative then appeared preferable to plunging into that dark, deep, bottomless abyss,

"Which came across her frenzy's full career,  
With shock of consciousness, cold—deep—severe,

And checked her headlong soul—

Alas, but to sink it deeper in despair!"

She had recoiled—even turned to re-enter her home, at least as pure as when she had last crossed its threshold; one backward step, and she was saved!

But no! God willed, that not to a mere momentary impulse, but to some exertion of her own free will—some struggle, her salvation might be permitted, and therefore she was to undergo a trial of her firmness of purpose. At this moment, a sudden, stronger gust of wind arose; the half open door swung upon its hinges. Sybil feebly raised her arm, to stay its course, but it was too late, the weak resistance was in vain. It banged, and was firmly closed, and she stood without, shut out from her own home—ashamed—afraid, to knock and seek admittance.

What! the servants come and find their mistress standing at her own door—stealing like some vile vagrant from their astonished gaze? It could not be, they would guess it all—yes, all! Conscience, rendered her abject—terrified. Her brain whirled, frenzy raged within her breast, all moral courage had vanished. The unfortunate Sybil raised her hands wildly above her head. The die was cast—the evil spirits of the air seemed howling round her, their laugh of triumph sounding in her ears.

Alas! alas! she the beloved, the treasured of so many hearts, had gone forth!

Amongst the spirits of evils abroad that night in the great metropolis—I speak not of those belonging to the invisible world, but of creatures clothed in human form, who roam forth, like beasts of prey, seeking whom they may devour—was Hardress Fitz Hugh. He had entered a coach and proceeded in the direction of Hyde Park. The driver was ordered to stop, as he turned into Park Lane—the Lennard's house faced the Park. Telling the coachman to wait his return, he alighted and bent his steps down the street. He had advanced a few yards, holding his hat over his brow, the rain beating in his face, when a woman's form caught his eye,

"Leaning as if both heart and strength had failed,"

against the railings of a house.

There was something in the appearance of the dress of that tall figure, which caused him to pause, turn, and gaze eagerly upon it. The female lifted up her face, from which the veil was rudely torn by the wind, and looked upon him with a wild stare. The flickering light of a lamp just opposite, revealed the countenance clearly to his view.

"Sybil!" he cried.

"Yes, Hardress," was the reply, "I am here—I am come," and she laughed wildly, "I am come."

The next threshold, through which Sybil Lennard stepped, was the abode of Hardress Fitz Hugh!

## CHAPTER XXXI.

"Pale roamer through the night! thou poor forlorn!  
Remorse that man on his death bed possesses,  
Who in the credulous hour of tenderness  
Betrayed, then cast thee forth to wanton scorn;

Man has no feeling for thy sore disgrace:  
Keen blows the blast upon the moulting dove.

COLERIDGE.

All struck upon his heart, sudden and cold;  
As death itself;  
It was a dreadful moment; not the tears,  
The lingering, lasting misery of years,  
Could match that minute's anguish—all the worst  
Of sorrow's elements, in that dark burst  
Broke o'er his soul, and with one crash of fate,  
Laid the whole hope of his life desolate."

L. E. L.

It has before been said, that the departure of Hardress Fitz Hugh had been announced in the papers, and to confirm more thoroughly the truth of this statement, the shutters of his house were closed, thereby giving it the appearance of being deserted by its usual inmates—whilst, in reality, the case stood thus.

Fitz Hugh, for the few last days, had been making his head quarters, a villa, a short distance from London; none, therefore, but his special confidants doubted of his departure for Ireland; nor were there any who imagined that in the apparently untenanted mansion, was enclosed the gem of beauty, once so prized—so jealousy guarded from the vulgar eye; but the fame of whose extraordinary loveliness, spread by a favored few, had excited so much curiosity amongst the associates of Hardress Fitz Hugh. Yes, still within those walls sat Norah Mahony, the once bright, cherished flower—but now how changed! Drooping, faded, pining "within her broken bower," the miserable victim of man's wickedness and caprice.

From the time since we last brought the unfortunate girl before our readers, this withering blight had been more decidedly advancing; for truly from that period had she reason to perceive and to feel, that her sun of love was withdrawing its beams forever.

Still, she had been suffered to remain with him, towards whom her heart clung, with such passionate tenacity—to be his slave—to execute his commands—to sit at his feet—to watch his countenance; and grief had so tamed her wild Irish spirit, that as long as this was permitted to her, she did not ask for more,

"Her tears were few—her wailing never loud."

Hardress thought she was resigned to her fate, and therefore perhaps it was, that he had not been so eager to hurry on the fulfilment of the plans he had now felt it necessary to form, concerning her. Perchance too, some feeling of compassion or regret might still linger on her account, which had induced Fitz Hugh, to postpone, to the last moment, the act, by which he was to cast off forever, one whose charms had once entwined so closely round his heart.

But, for the few last days, the scene had changed—Norah had not even seen Hardress. The house was closed, and in darkness and gloom she was left—now sunk in hopeless dejection.

This fatal day, however, was destined to be the crisis of her fate, as well as to form so dark a page in the history of the life of her unhappy rival. In the early morning, a muffled figure had entered the room where she sat, at whose feet she nearly fainted with delight, for she imagined it to be her lover. Soon however she perceived her mistake. It was his confidant and friend, Desmond, the Irish tutor, with whom Norah was well acquainted, for he had been a constant frequenter of the house, and one to whom all the secrets of his patron's household were perfectly known.

The man informed her of his mission. He had come with authority to escort her back to her country, and relatives, and bade her make ready for the journey. Then had ensued a scene, for which Desmond—hardened as was his nature—was ill prepared. With piteous moans and lamentations, the poor creature refused submission to a mandate, which was to tear her from the spot, from which she could scarce yet believe, all hope of joy and love was fled forever. And when from fair and gentle means, and soothing entreaties, Desmond, weary of her resistance, proceeded to threats and violent measures for her removal, fury usurped the place of her meeker anguish—

"The eyes shot forth, with all the livid fire,  
That haunts the tigress in her whelpless ire."

Wailing shrieks, more woeful and more piercing than the wildest notes ever raised by her country-women over the corpse of a departed, burst from her lips, and Desmond, fearing to arouse the neighborhood, had been forced for the time to desist, and departed.

At dusk he had returned, but found that Norah had taken care to secure herself from further attempts, by locking herself into the *studio*; the door of which, for the security of the valuables it contained, had been so contrived, that none but herself and Hardress knew the secret of its opening. From thence, neither stratagem—reasoning—nor threats could draw forth the wretched girl, though Desmond relaxed not in his efforts to fulfil the strict injunctions he had received.

It was between nine and ten, when a voice was heard at the door of that room, demanding admittance; and though its tones were those of smothered rage, it caused Norah to start from the ground on which she lay, with dishevelled hair, and uttering a cry of joy, she obeyed the order to open the door.

Into the particulars of the scene that followed we will not enter. Enough to relate, that in the full intoxication of the first moments of triumph, at the success of his so long, ardently desired scheme, Hardress was not in a mood to meet, with patience, obstinacy which proved so troublesome and serious a stumbling block in his way. Stifled sounds of fierce anger from his lips, followed by a sharp cry as if from bodily pain, as well as mental anguish, was all that was heard by those who were without. The next moment there shot forth from the *studio*, a female form with frenzied mien and streaming locks, which like an ominous bird, with a wild shriek, rushed past the tall form of Sybil, who

stood entranced "stiller than chiselled marble" in the passage through which the figure fled, and vanished from the sight into the dark and stormy night.

And what effect had this startling scene produced upon the wretched Mrs. Lennard? That apparition which had glared for an instant with such fearful wildness upon her, and then with a cry, as of a lost spirit, disappeared from before her eyes? Alas! to her whirling, half-mazed brain, even this spectacle seemed but to form a portion of the enchanted world to which she had yielded herself—a vague representation of the demons that had dragged her on, to the fatal step which had brought her to that spot, and scarce sufficed to wake her bewitched senses to a knowledge of the plain reality of her situation. But soon, conducted with proud triumph into that chamber of genius and beauty, in which was congregated all that art could devise to lull the weak senses, and enflame still more the fevered imagination, as by a stroke of counter-acting magic—the spell was dissolved.

Seated before a galaxy of pictured loveliness of every form and feature, Sybil's bewildered, wondering gaze was directed towards one portrait, which in frame more gorgeous than the rest, showed foremost of the houri-like group; and she was desired to behold her own image, though but the dim shadow of her present glorious perfection—which image had ever reigned the presiding divinity of *his* private hours—the unskilled labor of his youthful days, more dear, more proudly precious to his heart, than ought of peerless beauty, his pencil had since portrayed.

Then the wretched being to whom these words were addressed, started as if from the awakening presence of the eye of judgment, as her glance fell, fascinated, upon that representation of purity and innocence—once her *own*? Was it a spectre of her former self that rose before her sight, to lead her back "in bitter mockery o'er the shining track," to all the bliss and peace of her past existence—to show her what she then was—and what *now*?

To regain all these past possessions, the yearning, agonizing desire, with a sudden burst of disenchanted feeling, rushed in upon her mind—*now*, when she knew that it was too late—all over,—that she was beyond the power of salvation—that she could only look upon what she had been, as fallen angels view their lost estate, from which their frailties have for ever separated them.

In all its naked horror, her infatuated sin appeared before her, and shrinking—shame-struck, she stood facing the pictured image of that child of promise—the father's tender joy—the stern mother's pride; ay, truly *pride* in its fullest extent!

How wonderful the workings of the mind! What multitudes of thoughts, ideas, feelings, in the twinkling of an eye will flash upon it! recollections, scenes, joys, sorrows! The mind beholds forms, hears voices, in quick succession, passing across the imagination:—and whilst Sybil stood wildly gazing upon her girlish image, passionate words of adoration were poured into her ears, from lips which alas! too late



had lost their magic, sorcerer-like influence; and the first germs of hatred—yes, loathing hatred, then crept into her breast.—The fatal spell was broken for ever!

Truly Hardress Fitz Hugh, all love from moral hearts had flown from you, with that young being, who had just passed from your door. Pitiless—reckless, you scarce cared to know even if she had been followed, her delicate, pampered frame, saved from the peril of exposure to the storm and darkness. You cared not *then*, gloating as you were, over your long coveted prey. But in after days—in

“The dark, deep, thinking hours of midnight,”

in solitude—on the bed of sickness—on the bed of death, might not the accusing form of your forsaken victim, float like a meteor before your sight, that thrilling shriek smite upon your ears, striking your appalled conscience with sore trembling, and horrible dread?

Assuredly a hand will come forth, and write upon the wall against you, as it did of old in the sight of an impious monarch. And wretched man! darker guilt must in that awful day, weigh like a mill-stone on your soul—guilt from which, in your most hardened—selfish cruelty, you would have given much to have spared your conscience—for the *life* of a fellow creature, shall be required of you.

Strange and startling it must have been to the chance passengers on that inclement night, to behold the madly flying form, scared by their sight, like the tempest beat a bird; if, indeed, strange and startling, ought can be, to the frequenters of the vice-trodden, misery haunted streets of the metropolis.

All trace of Norah was lost; the pouring rain, the howling wind, favoring the defeat of the pursuit. The night, and early morning had been vainly spent in search of the unfortunate girl, by Desmond, and several persons employed to assist him: dark suspicions began to suggest themselves to their minds.

A crowd of stragglers were, the next afternoon, collected near the banks of the Serpentine, watching proceedings of too frequent occurrence, to excite feelings of a much deeper nature, than that curiosity, which the love of the horrible so inherent in the vulgar breast, generally creates on such occasions; but suddenly a murmur ran through the assembled multitude of more than common interest, and all were striving to press nearer. Drawn from the sullen waters, the lifeless body of a woman appeared, and was borne from amongst them, towards the Humane Society Asylum.

The sight of the form of the unfortunate girl, the long, yellow hair floating back from her head, dropping streams of water, as the body was carried along, was of itself sufficient to identify the victim, and it was scarcely necessary to draw near and look upon that bloodless face. But the man Desmond, who, as the emissary of his friend, felt himself in some degree responsible in the matter, came forward, and in the lifeless corpse, (for soon it was ascertained that all human aid was in vain,) he recognized

the cottage girl of fatal loveliness, known to him from a child—loveliness which the watery bed in which she had found a resting place during the night, had not disfigured.

No, still so exquisite was the beauty of the poor dead girl, when she was placed on the couch prepared for her, that the most callous of those, permitted to approach to gratify their idle curiosity, were moved to a startled exclamation of wonder and compassion. The spectacle afforded more than common interest, to many amongst the number; for a rumor of the nature of the tragedy had transpired, and with heartless avidity, all had pressed forward, to avail themselves of this horrid opportunity, of taking a first and last look, at the celebrated beauty, the companion of Fitz Hugh, who was equally notorious for his profligacy, and talent.

And had the fair, faded being before them been that same creature—the victim of sinful, lawless passion—she with that pale, unsullied brow—calm, placid cheek—the countenance on which reposed the expression of almost infantine innocence and simplicity? Yes, so it was! Before them lay the mortal body of Norah Mahony: the face no longer lighted up by the unhallowed flame of guilty pleasures, or the wild, raging fire of carnal misery, but now again by the hand of death—restored to the image of that pure and lovely temple, which once came forth from the hands of its great builder—fit receptacle for the spirit of Heavenly grace and purity, for which it was originally erected, but—awful thought!—from whence sin had banished it.

It befits us not to seek to inquire into the measure of eternal punishment, which will be the portion of those, who, like this unfortunate being, have been perverted and led astray in their weakness, ignorance, and blindness of heart. It is a consideration of far too awful an import to handle in a work of this description, and belongs to the secret things which are not revealed. But this we know, and may declare—and we shrink not from so doing, to remind such of our readers who, perchance, may close their eyes against all sacred revelation—that to those who have caused the poor to fall and perish, and the ignorant and blind to go out of their way—against them—the perverters of the young and innocent, will be annexed the guilt of those lost creature—fallen through the wickedness of their deceit.

But let us turn from these most revolting scenes, of the narrative we have undertaken to relate. Difficult has of late been our task—forced, as it were, to weigh every word—measure every expression—lest unwittingly we should extenuate, or gild with false colors the crimes we would bring forward, not to serve as a dread warning—to show the retributive misery of the guilty—of those who have selfishly indulged in sin! Gladly we turn away—for though it be to meet those who are in tears and anguish—their grief may at least claim our deepest and unmingled sympathy.

The surprise—the doubts—the misgivings—the mysterious whispers—the dark insinuations, which spread amongst the household, when the disappearance of Mrs. Lennard became known, may well be imagined; especially when the

last supposition was destroyed, by discovering, from enquiries made at the residence of Mrs. Clareville, that so far from their mistress being there, the owner herself was still in the country. The upper domestics sat in council upon the steps to be taken, and with caution and discretion every measure was pursued, likely to throw light upon the affair. The house-steward, an attached and faithful servant, received a fearful (though as it proved in that case) false alarm. Returning in perplexity and grief from an unsuccessful expedition, he observed the crowd assembled by the Serpentine, and was informed by a stander-by of the accident.

"The body of a lady," the man said, "had just been drawn from the water."

The steward turned faint, but with presence of mind, restrained himself from giving vent to the frightful fancies which presented themselves to his mind, and nerving himself for the worst, approached—gazed upon the corpse—then retired, breathing a prayer of thanks to Heaven. However, by a curious coincidence, his former informants proceeded to give him further particulars concerning the deceased—communicating to him the rumor afloat, that it was the mistress of the distinguished radical member—Mr. Fitz Hugh—who had destroyed herself.

The servant departed, and went immediately to the abode of Fitz Hugh. He had shrunk from doing so before—it was too horrible a suspicion—but now he *would* go. The house was shut up—and from the old woman that came to the door, no information of any kind could be gained. But it is needless dwelling on these particulars; suffice it, that from the slight gleams of light thrown on the subject, the doubts and suspicions of the servants were but too direfully strengthened, when the dreaded time drew near for the expected arrival of their beloved master.

Between seven and eight in the evening the carriage clattered up to the door. The loud peal and thundering knock followed, and the door was opened—but how much more tardily than was usual on such occasions!—and in another moment the hall-lamp shone full upon the face of Albert Lennard, and that of his little travelling companion, whom he had lifted from the carriage and borne in his arms into the house. The servants—generally so eager in pressing forward to greet, with officious attention and willing service, him, whose coming was a gladness to all—now hung back; but Mr. Lennard paused not to notice this. He merely uttered his usual cheerful, "Is all right?" and again lifting his little daughter from the ground, to expedite their movements, sprang up stairs.

The words, "Here we are, Papa!" directed him to the dressing-room, where, in another moment, he had deposited his charge, and received in exchange his other children, who flew into his arms and hid their faces in his bosom. He strained them to his heart—his eyes, in the meantime, seeking for his wife—she who was

not wont to be the last to appear, to claim her share of his notice.

"Come, my pets," he said, laughing, for he was becoming somewhat impatient at being detained from discovering the reason of her non-appearance—"here is little Sybil waiting to be noticed: where is your Mamma, darlings?—is she here?" and disengaging himself from the children, he opened the door of the bed-room and looked in—but no—not there!

"Where is your mother?" Mr. Lennard again inquired, in a tone of surprise, turning to his children; "has she gone out?"

The boy looked into his father's face with a frightened and mysterious air, but did not speak; Mary became very pale—clasped her hands and sobbed. The young Sybil stood—her cheeks flushed from the effects of her journey—her dark eyes roving restlessly around, and seeming to grow larger and larger—her stately little form clad in her travelling dress, appearing to swell higher and higher with surprise and displeasure, at a reception of so different a nature from that which her Papa had led her to anticipate. Where was the Mamma who would be expecting her with such eager delight!—where, all the charming excitement her arrival was to create! No Mamma—no welcome from any one!

The father stood still, and gazed for a moment in silent, startled astonishment at the two children; his countenance changed—his color slightly faded from his cheek; he glanced again quickly round the apartment, then crossed it with hasty steps—put forth his hand, and was about to ring the bell, when some inward impulse caused him to refrain. He turned, and once more approached his elder daughter; he took her hand, and fixing his eyes full upon her face, said, with an expression of countenance, and in a tone of voice which ever after clung to the memory of the child,

"Mary, my life!—tell me, *where* is your mother?"

They were but a few broken sentences, that his innocent daughter sobbed forth on his bosom, in connexion with her mother's name, but they proved enough to send the first stab of a horrible suspicion, with fatal sharpness, into Albert's heart; his arms relaxed his hold of Mary; he staggered, then fell at the feet of his three innocent children, whose terror may be well imagined. The boy threw himself down by his father, and with epithets of endearment, flung his little arms around the prostrate form, and strove to hug it into consciousness. Young Sybil screamed and stamped her feet, and wrung her hands in an agony of passionate terror; Mary looked as if about to fall by her parent's side.

This was the scene which presented itself to the sight of those, who, having nerved themselves to the dreadful task which it was necessary for them to fulfil, had been with tardy steps approaching, and who at these startling sounds, burst into the room.



## CHAPTER XXXII.

## PART THIRD.

There have been roses round my lute, but now  
I must forsake them for the cypress bough—  
Now is my tale of tears! L. E. L.

Sweet babes! who, like the little playful fawns,  
Were wont to trip along  
By your delighted mother's side,  
Who now your infant steps shall guide?

Oh, loss beyond repair!  
Oh, wretched father! left alone,  
To weep their dire misfortune, and thy own.  
LITTLETON.

AND now, how shall I proceed?

"'Tis well that age  
Hath made me like a child, that can weep;  
My heart would else have broken, overcharged,  
And I, false servant, should lie down to rest  
Before my work is done."

Tears—tears! I thought their source was dried for ever in my brain as I journeyed on towards London, with two as tearless as myself; and they were those beings, whose ears were still ringing with the tidings, that had made them the reputed parents of shame and infamy. But from a different cause to mine were their tears impeded. Alas! from the moment I had read the fatal communication, I felt struck with the conviction, of the hopeless, rayless certainty of the very worst. And merciful Heavens! was not that enough to have quenched the very life blood in my veins! But the father and mother *would* not weep. What! should they allow their tears to fall, and thus, as it were, sanction this tale of utter madness—the *supposed* dishonor of their child of purity and perfection?

"Mrs. Lennard had left her home; and, from every apparent circumstance preceding the act, as well as from the few slight traces which had been discovered of her since her disappearance, the suspicion as to her accomplice in her flight had fallen upon Mr. Fitz Hugh."

Such was the epitome of the tale which that morning had reached the father and mother of Sybil Lennard; and with stern—almost superhuman strength, did they seem to be battling against the waves of misery, by which, with the very supposition of such an evil, I should have imagined they would have been at once overwhelmed—even as I was, I then thought, forever.

But the sequel proved, with what frightful violence to their feelings, the struggle must have been accomplished.

Arrived in Park-lane, the following day, Mrs. Devereux descended from the carriage with her wonted dignified composure, and inquired, in her usual impressive tone of self-importance, for *her daughter*, Mrs. Lennard. One glance at the domestic was sufficient to tell us that our doom was sealed—that the demand was mockery! And the mother sat, calm and apparently composed, that next day, and again the next, waiting—she said, for *her daughter*,—for *Albert's wife*—whilst all around her were tossed in the bitter waves of utter despair and anguish.

Great God!—was that the same Albert who, but three days before, had departed like a bright

sun from amongst us—that grief-bewildered being who stood up, as we entered the dressing-room, with haggard eye and bloodless cheek?

The children were hanging round their father, but, on my entrance, sprang to meet me, and by their greeting broke, in a degree, the horror of the first meeting—a scene which I will not portray. At length I drew away the little ones, and led them to their grandmother, but only to witness their innocent wonderings at the little notice she bestowed on them—even on her worshipped Sybil. And then her strange perseverance in asking for their mother, in spite of their affecting endeavors, to make her understand and sympathise in the piteous tale they poured into her ears—"That Mamma was gone, and that Papa's heart would break—all their hearts must break; what should they do if she came not back?"

It was to me too heart-rending, but I was forced to bind up my bleeding spirit to nerve it for all that it was called upon to undergo, for my office henceforth was to be, "to dry up tears, not to shed them."

I shall not enter into a detail of the steps taken to trace out the fugitive. Alas! from all the suspicious particulars, gained from the servants, concerning the circumstances preceding the catastrophe—the long and daily visits of Fitz Hugh—the strange and altered appearance of their lady, especially during the last day—little doubt could reasonably be entertained of the truth of the case by Mr. Devereux and myself. But Albert—he could not, would not be brought to believe it possible—or if indeed it was so, in a fit of mental derangement, the fatal step must have been taken. And to know that the wife—once—*still*, so fondly beloved—was in safety beneath his own roof, or under the protection of her parents, even though lost to him, seemed to constitute the chief, earnest desire of his soul.

In answer to the dreadful communication made to them through me—public rumor having before reached their horror-stricken, unbelieving ears—Sir William Mordaunt and his wife flew to offer all the assistance that, under such sad circumstances, they could afford. Sir William set off to support the wretched father in his distressing expedition of discovery; the stern and resolute nature of the Baronet, well fitting him for so critical an undertaking.

It had been with some difficulty that Mr. Lennard was prevented from forming one of the party—How could his proximity fail to lure back the last one!—and then his thirst to avenge *her* I verily feel assured his own wrong sank to nothingness, before that of the being whom he believed to be the innocent victim of some fiendish plot of his vicious, profligate enemy—Who should slake his vengeance but himself? The alarming pitch of excitement which followed our arrival, had succeeded the utter prostration of sense and feeling, into which the unhappy man had been thrown for the first twelve hours after the shock; when, however, the hour for departure arrived, he had again sunk so low in bodily strength, as well as exhaustion of mind, that he was at length persuaded that his company would only retard the

measures of the others. Into the particulars of their fruitless mission I need not enter. They had scarcely left us when a letter was dropped at the door, directed to Mr. Lennard, in an unknown hand. On its being opened by me, according to his directions, what were my feelings to find it contained the writing of Sybil, though changed and deformed, as had become the mind of that unfortunate creature?

The words were—"Albert, I can be yours no more—I have given myself to another; seek me not. When you receive this, I shall be far from the possibility of recovery, and with *him* whom fate has ordained as the future companion of my existence.—*Sybil*."

The wedding-ring was enclosed—no date! Imagine, reader, the wretched husband's feelings! He was cast down at once in a lethargy of hopeless despair. The man who had been chosen, from his mind of vigorous energy, as well as conspicuous talent and wisdom, to assist to guide the helm of the intricate affairs of the nation!—where was now his strength—his energy? His strength was truly perfect weakness—prostrate was every power of mind and body.

The children were still allowed to be with their father—Lady Mordaunt offered, on her first arrival, to take them to her house, but this proposal Mr. Lennard had resisted. It was the innocent tears of his darlings upon his cheek, which had roused him from the dark trance of his first prostration of energy; he must have died but for them; in their presence, he was kept from utterly sinking. They were, therefore, still suffered to hang round him; and in the extremity of all our reckless anguish, we thought not of the injury, which scenes of distress—such as they were forced to witness—might produce on the minds of the young creatures.

The boy lay, most of the day, his soft cheek pressed against his father's, murmuring sweet or playful endearments in his ear, between the bursts of bitter agony which broke forth from that poor father's lips; sometimes also manifested in the convulsive embraces, in which the child was strained with words of passionate fondness, to the breast of the miserable parent. Ah! blessed boy! in sorrow or in joy, even at that tender age, thou wert like an angel of consolation!

But the poor little girls—they demanded most pity; not only from their slight superiority of age, but also their more premature susceptibility of suffering, which I have ever remarked as amongst the many sad prerogatives of our sex. Mary was often by her father's side; but the sight of his inconsolable misery, was almost too much for her feeling heart; and she would come to me as I sat in the adjoining room, to seek for some relief—some consolation—to question me earnestly in woful anguish, on the nature of their sad affliction—how it was—what it was! to beg me to explain the—to her—dark mystery of her mother's loss—

"Oh! it was pitiful to see  
That meek child in *Aer* misery,  
And her little prayers to hear."

For I could but bid her pray—I could

"...Not give that knowledge dark,  
To a soul so innocent."

I could only bid her pray to God, for He alone could help us—even whilst my faithless, rebellious heart, contradicted my words, by its unending groans of "Who can now lift us up—who can show us any good?" in our remediless—shoreless woe!

And Mary would lift her streaming eyes, and with clasped hands raise her sweet voice to her Father in Heaven, imploring for mercy for her afflicted father—for her lost mother!—little knowing poor child, the double signification of that last epithet. Her infant accents reached the sufferer's ears; he called her to his side, and said,

"Mary pray—pray on—pray night and day, dear child—for we greatly need your prayers—but above all, pray for *her*."

And again, that interceding voice, arose like an angel's, midst the storm and darkness, and whilst it continued, seemed to soothe the tempest-tossed spirit of him who listened. To a mind like Mary's—of such naturally heavenly birth, nought could come amiss, but the little Sybil—on her young heart, I verily believe the blight of her mother's sin, cast its first shadow.

The child showed not the same affectionate signs of feeling as her sister, at the sight of her father's afflicted state. Ever accustomed to be the caressed, rather than the caresser, she seemed shy of manifesting to him her sympathy, by imitating the tender, loving manner of her little brother. But she would stand at a distance gazing upon him, listening to his groans or manifestations of agony—her large eyes expressing mingled trouble and wonder, then roam about from place to place, like a frightened bird, scared by the darkness—a darkness truly, "that could be felt," which brooded over all within the house, till weary—wretched, the poor child yielded at last to my endeavors, to draw her to my side—which, with the wild timidity of a young gazelle, she had, at first, resisted—and consented to share with her sister, the gentle solace, which I, with my own breaking heart was able to bestow. Once I led her to the door of her father's room, for she seemed uncomfortable I thought, when Mary and Bertie were with him, and she shut out from a participation in their tender caresses. She crept up to the sofa on which he lay, and softly placed her little hand on his. Mr. Lennard, pressing it to his heart, murmured,

"Which is this!"

She whispered—

"Sybil!"

And the father groaned and started up, as if a knife had pierced through his frame; but the next moment, he caught the child convulsively in his arms with passionate energy.

"Sybil!" Oh! that name, once so dear, how its sound, now thrilled through every fibre of our hearts!



## CHAPTER XXXIII.

Oh, who will give me tears? Come all ye springs  
Dwell in my head and eyes; come, clouds and rain:  
My grief hath need of all the wat'ry things,  
That Nature hath produced.

HERBERT.

These are words of deeper sorrow  
Than the wail above the dead;

Every feeling hath been shaken;  
Pride which not a world could bow  
Bows to thee—by thee forsaken,  
Even my soul forsakes me now.

BYRON.

LADY MORDAUNT shared with me the duties of this trying season; she had taken upon herself the department of watching over Mrs. Devereux. That unfortunate lady, for the first two days succeeding her arrival in London, continued in the state of torpor before described, and which I have ever felt convinced, was brought on by the stunning effects of the words, which greeted her entrance into the house; meeting as they did, her mind, in the strained pitch of excitement to which, since the first receipt of the fatal communication at Oakleigh, it had been worked.

Mrs. Armstrong was the first person on whom Mrs. Devereux's eyes had fallen, when she arrived in Park Lane; whilst, at the same time, in answer to her proud demand of "Where is my daughter?" the nurse had pronounced in accents almost as stern,

"You have no daughter, madam—she has cast herself away—she has dishonored us all!"

On the morning of the third day, however, a change was perceptible. Lady Mordaunt came to beg me to be present at the trying moment which must attend the awakening of her unhappy aunt, to a sense of the reality of the case. We took little Sybil with us, and found Mrs. Devereux much in the state of a person, arousing from the deep sleep produced by the effects of a strong opiate. She looked at her grandchild; then our pale and altered countenances seemed to attract her attention, and she cast her eyes with a wild bewildered air round the room.

"Speak to your grandmamma, darling!" we said to the child; and accordingly, Sybil began:

"Grandmamma, when will you go back to Oakleigh, and be well again! London is such a dark, unhappy place."

Still Mrs. Devereux looked confused and distressed, and at a loss how to answer; but turning, after a pause, to Lady Mordaunt and myself, she said collectedly,

"Really, I am ashamed that the child should see me thus. It is very strange. I suppose we are in London—but will you tell me what brought us here?"

Lady Mordaunt took her hand: with admirable tact, she endeavored to bring back her aunt's mind to the communication which had greeted her first arrival, for there was no use in temporising in such a case as this. The poor lady then was made to remember, that already she had been apprised, that her daughter had left her home.

"Left her home!" she repeated, her features all working convulsively, "you mean I sup-

pose, that she is dead. Oh! I know that is what you mean," she continued, waving her hand impatiently, "she is gone to her grave—in what other manner could my daughter leave her home? Not dead! What! would you make me believe that the other words they told me were true! That the being I bore—I nurtured with such care, has become a vile castaway—a creature for whom the strongest epithet of infamy and shame, is but too honorable! What—what do you say! They have gone to tear her from the arms of her paramour—to force her back! Let them not bring her before my eyes, if she wish not to hear my curse—to be spurned with my foot, as a thing most vile and abominable. Yes, curses! *curses* on the head of the reprobate wife and mother! "Child—child!" and she seized the arm of the terrified little girl; "your name is Sybil, or I would curse that name, and all who ever owned it—cast it off child, as a word most loathsome—a shame and reproach to you forever; for it is the name of *your mother*—the mother who has destroyed *your good name*, as well as that of *all* belonging to her. Curse the day that gave you birth—curse—"

But we threw ourselves before her; we implored her forbearance—her pity, for the wretched being she thus anathematized; and Lady Mordaunt sent the affrighted child away.

There was, however, no power of softening the mother's feelings; we invoked forbearance, but to draw down more harsh denunciations from her lips, on the head of one so lately her pride and crown of glory.

It was dreadful to see the stoical woman—like the sturdy oak of centuries, rocked by the sudden tempest—under the influence of such fierce passions. But their very violence perforce, caused the speedy exhaustion of their outward demonstration, and without a relieving tear, Mrs. Devereux sank down upon a chair with shaking form and quivering lip; the strong, time-resisting frame, struck—as it must have been in one short hour—with all the appearance of decrepit old age.

"He has stripped me of my glory, and taken the crown from my head; He has destroyed me on every side, and I am gone, and my hope He has removed like a tree."

"Fearful Scripture!" as a poor sinner once before said—fearful indeed to us, and so woefully applicable!

But I will dwell no longer on a period fraught with agony, such as no pen can portray—an agony bereft of all hope, all consolation.

Death! oh! what is death in comparison to such grief—such truly shame-faced grief? When death tears from us, the beloved of our hearts, though our tears must fall, we feel that the affliction is not without its consolation—its dignity; we are stricken by the hand of God, and must bow to His mysterious dispensations; and when time at last arrives, with healing on its wings, our hearts will close on the cherished object, and it will be embalmed forever, in our most sacred and endearing recollections; but when our joys are nipped in the blossom by the withering hand of *crime*, no such consolation remains; every thought is as a scorpion's sting

and every memory is madness—every feeling and recollection, but as festering, rankling sores, which no time can cure.

I will but briefly relate, that the issue of Mr. Devereux's and Sir William Mordaunt's expedition, proved the final stroke to our last desperate hope of saving the wretched object of that pursuit, from the fangs of her destroyer, though to never-ending disgrace, the world must ever have consigned her. With such skill and subtlety were the movements of the guilty pair directed, that notwithstanding the most indefatigable research, no trace of them had been discovered—save that, which gave every reason for the conjecture, that they had embarked from a French port, several days before, in a ship bound for America.

One circumstance I had nearly forgotten to mention. A letter came soon after our arrival in London, addressed to me, from Mrs. Clareville, conveying her deepest condolence to her cousin, on the late sad event—expressing all the horror, astonishment, and distress, with which the catastrophe had filled her—the more dreadful, from the fact of the guilty Fitz Hugh being one, whom she had looked upon as a friend. She, however, earnestly entreated to be excused from having been aware, in the remotest degree, of the feeling existing between the guilty pair, and which had led to such a fatal result, and ended by offering her services to her afflicted relative. It may be imagined how these offers were received. No! her services, under that relative's roof, had been already of too black a nature to be again required—never again did her shadow darken his walls. Alas! there were remaining vestiges, but too evident, of the pernicious influence she had aided to diffuse.

A few days before our departure for Worthing, which, as a quiet spot, had been chosen for the temporary retreat of the stricken party—there to carry their bleeding hearts, and shattered frames—a dreadful task was mine.

Albert Lennard summoned me to his presence. He was in the dressing-room—*her* dressing-room! Here for a whole morning he had remained with the door locked: groans—deep groans from thence had issued—but now his countenance was calm, with that calmness, which speaks of the bitterness of death, as having passed from the soul—

"Mademoiselle," he said, in a voice like the low wind's moan, as he wrung my hand, "grief makes one very selfish, or I should not now have sent for you, to request your services on the present occasion—a service which I can scarcely imagine will cost you much less agony than it has given me. I have already caused much pain and trouble to all my friends—to you most especially, but I trust this sore affliction—this wound too deep to be ever healed whilst I live, may from henceforth, at least, be endured as becomes a Christian and a man. A man—ah! no! for strength and pride, and scorn, must come to the aid of injured man in such cases—pride which should force him to forget, or hate, and thus sear the wound—but forget her—hate her—*never!* No, I can but as an unworthy sinner, before a righteous judge, bow

through life beneath the heavy cross—but a cross not heavier than my heavenly master bore for me. 'It is the Lord, let Him do what seemeth Him good—though He slay me, yet will I trust Him.' Ah! Mademoiselle," he continued, a wan smile irradiating his pale face, "it is in such seasons as this, that man feels most truly, that there is a God—a Saviour who hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows, and who intercedes for His smitten and afflicted creatures—Or else whence that inward stay—that light felt and seen, even in moments when the world is black and cold as the grave—every breath we draw, painful as if the never dying worm, of gnawing despair, were entering into the very soul. For what is man—his pride—his wisdom—his power in affliction's dread hour? Oh! had it not been for *that light and stay*, I should now be grovelling like a worm upon the ground. For look—look Mademoiselle, what has been my occupation!"

And he grasped my hand, and pointed to a table, on which stood the open desk and dressing-case of Sybil, and by their side, all the most familiar objects she had called her own.

There was her work—the last in which she had been engaged—a purse for her husband. And there were his own letters to herself carefully preserved—his picture—those of her children! Nothing to be seen—nothing, as on my after inspection, I found, but those possessions, speaking in themselves, of the fond devotion of a wife and mother.

"Now, Mademoiselle," said Albert, speaking in a calmer tone, "my petition is, that before I leave this house, you will kindly collect every article which you may imagine she might still in any way value—all except this," and he removed his own picture from amongst those of the children. "Her jewels of course—indeed, everything she ever possessed, must be prepared again to be hers—if ever—or sent to her, if—in short, whatever happens, I would wish it to be so. And Mademoiselle, one more request I have to make—Her name, I know, must be no more mentioned before the world; her children must not speak it—their innocent lips must be taught to repress the familiar sound of 'Mother.' But before God—oh! friend of her pure, guileless childhood, and virtuous youth! suffer them—teach them to breathe it night and morning—And when the day comes, when the truth, at last, must be known to them, let it find their hearts prepared, with pitying and sorrowful sympathy, to plead, through the all purifying blood of their Redeemer, that the stain of their parent's sin, may be washed away. The stain! it maddens me to think of the past! Mademoiselle, look—see what is here! Amongst all her treasures, nothing met my eye, which in any way could give the slightest clue to this darkest of mysteries, but that chiffonier I chanced to open."

I looked, and there beheld books, some in paper sealed and directed to Mrs. Clareville in Sybil's hand-writing. Amongst the volumes I discovered those which had caused the little scene I described a few days before my departure with Mr. Lennard for Oakleigh—novels—*French novels!* And there was poetry—some



passages of it blotted with tears, and marked as with a bold, impetuous hand. All that had passed, flitted before my eyes, as with a dizzy, aching brain, I examined the contents of those pages.

"Before this met my eyes," continued Albert, "I had refrained from cursing even *him*—but that sight maddened me—It distracted me, to think of the cold blooded train of pernicious villainy they must have laid to pervert a mind of purity and innocence; and in the bitterness of my heart, I not only cursed those who had administered the poison, but *all* who *prepare*, for similar purposes, defilement such as these volumes contain."

Incoherently and briefly have I poured forth snatches of my weary song; but, notwithstanding, already has the late sad subject monopolized too much space in these memoirs to suit well the plan on which I had formed my recital. Passing, therefore, over an interval of time, during which repeated trials of an agonizing nature lacerated the wounding, bleeding heart of Albert Lennard, we will again leave him at the crisis which gave the finishing stroke to his misery—the moment which found him released from the ties which bound him to his wife—and the woman who once claimed that title—the wife of another! The once idolized being—the wife of his bosom—bone of his bone, flesh of his flesh—the mother of his children!—she lived, and yet was lost to him. Had she but died!

The eight years of bliss must be remembered, as the bewildered dream of one, who wakes to darkness and anguish.

#### CHAPTER XXXIV.

She still was young, and had been fair,

That frost and fever that wear the heart,  
Had made the colors of youth depart  
From the sallow cheek, save over it came  
The burning flush of the spirit's shame.

All she had left for her friends to keep  
Was a name to hide, and a memory to weep!—L. E. L.

In an apartment of an hotel in a small town on the north French Coast, sat one morning a woman, whose form and face looked as if they had naturally been the seat of dignity, grace, and beauty, but of which attributes, her almost slovenly, careless attire, and the dark gloom settled on her countenance, had nearly deprived them. She was young, but with none of the bright color or look of youth on her sallow cheek, or in the expression of her large dark eyes; save when ever and anon, a flush, as of a fiery, burning flame, would pass across her cheek, and her eyes become illumined with a wild air of desperation, as if she were goaded almost to frenzy by some inward sting.

And, this was Sybil—and those acquainted with her former history will not be surprised to find her thus. Surely if guilt and shame, and misery, ever received their due reward, they had reaped it in this instance. Extreme was her punishment—Her crime had scarcely been attended with the usual,

"Lightning gleam of fierce delight!

\* \* \* \* \*  
One hasty draught of happiness—  
And her lip had venom quailed."

Forced—hurried from England, in spite of her obstructed efforts to break through the loathsome fetters that bound her—if it were only to yield herself to her husband's scorn—his indignation, and receive, whilst he spurned her from him, the sentence of perpetual banishment—on recovering from the violent prostration of a brain fever, which attack had impeded their intended embarkation for America, in the very act (thus missing their puruers) the unfortunate creature had resigned herself with the hopeless recklessness of one—who is lost for ever—to her dreadful fate.

And he—Hardress Fitz Hugh—once accustomed to love—warm, glowing, as sunshine in all its passionate fervor, was now forced to be content with the cold, apathetic toleration of a despairing victim. But full of exultation at his success—success not only in love, but in hatred—revenge—in the accomplishment of every dream of his early youth and later manhood—he felt that it was enough that *she* was *his*—that he had deprived his detested rival of the long coveted possession.

And it was strange, the strength which his passion for Sybil had attained. The creature of towering genius, stood subdued before her who could claim no other title than that of his slave; not all her undisguised repugnance—succeeding rapidly to the temporary flame of infatuation, which had flashed for a brief space upon her senses—could abate his love—no—for her punishment, his admiration seemed rather to increase.

Under an assumed name, he travelled with her over the greater part of the continent—sparing no endeavors—no art, to regain that magnetic influence over her feelings, which, for a brief time, he had so successfully achieved. And though vain were his attempts; still he persevered—he relaxed not; and the close of three months found him journeying back towards the north, for the better forwarding of arrangements which would bind her to him by more certain and irrevocable ties. He revealed not to her his purpose till the time arrived, when it was necessary for her to take part in the transaction; and then from "the blank and pulseless torpor—the sealed up apathy," which had rapt of late the miserable woman, she was once more awakened to the lively torture—the passionate, agonised struggles of one who sees her last hope of peace and heaven about to take its flight, never to return. In fact, she saw the deed...awaiting but her sanction...which was to set an impassable barrier between herself and the being she in reality still dearly, fervently loved—and bereave her of his name...her children's name—destroy her remotest chance of dying at his feet. For such was the dream which sometimes lighted up the gloomy darkness of the past and present wretched period. Once more to listen to his angel voice—to hear it promising her forgiveness...ah! this could never be realized—yet still, to be chained by the laws of God and

man to another—and that other hated by her—to be forced into the sin of becoming the wife of one—her whole heart and soul another's—to breathe at the altar vows of perjury!.

Oh, it was distracting—maddening!—and she fell at the feet of Hardress and told him all this—besought him to be content with the ruin he had already wrought, and spare her further guilt and wretchedness—to suffer her to leave him, in order to hide her face in some dark spot, where at least she might end her days in penitence and obscurity. She had not wept or prayed before, but now her tears flowed in streams—her supplications were poured forth with all the eloquence of agony.

Then Fitz Hugh, smothering the fierce anger which her words excited, laid before her, with all the art and strength of argument and eloquence—of which he was so supremely the master—the plain realities of the case. A child was to be born, which must either be the nameless offspring, branded with the stain of illegitimacy and shame—having good reason to curse the mother that bore it—or the child of honorable name and situation. He revealed to her, that at that moment he stood in the position of one, who must henceforth depend for subsistence on the labor of his hands—for his uncle, Lord Castlerosse, incensed at the injury his nephew had inflicted on the friend of his early years, had disinherited him from succeeding to his fortune, and the title which he had intended soliciting for him. But there was hope in the expected child; for if it proved a boy, he had little fear. For the deed spoke of the aggressor, not of his descendants, and rather than his title and estate should pass from his race for ever, he doubted not Lord Castlerosse might be persuaded to transfer the right of inheritance, from the father to the son.

Fitz Hugh descanted emphatically upon all the advantages the step would bring with it, with regard to herself; but to this point Sybil would not for a moment listen. "She could not," she exclaimed, in bitter despair, "cast off the shame—the infamy that was stamped so indelibly on her brow, no worldly reparation could ever wash it out."

And then the wily tempter changed his tone, and told her that though *her* love had subsided, his attachment was not of that light nature—his feelings not the mere impulse of the moment—the evanescence of passion! such as her subsequent conduct too plainly evinced, had been the transient flame which made her his. No! *his* love was the unalterable attachment, which had grown with his growth, and strengthened with his manhood—it was not likely he would now relinquish her. In short, Hardress gave the unfortunate Sybil her choice, either to continue in her present position, or to consent to become his wife; but till that last point had been accomplished, he declared he would neither lose sight of her a moment, nor return to England; on the contrary, to America, or some other far off land he would conduct her. Their marriage once celebrated, they might return to their country; she would be received into his uncle's house, with the respect and consideration due to his wife; and it would be

the study of his future life to make her happy. He feared no endeavors on the part of her friends to recover their lost one—the time had passed to render such an event even desirable; their letters would convince her, that they fully coincided in the expediency of the step he now pressed upon her—indeed what could more fully persuade her of the madness of striving to avoid this proceeding, than the fact of Albert Lennard her former husband, having yielded to his application, and in consequence, set on foot the measures which were to dissolve their marriage! He told her not of the struggles of that husband, before giving his consent to such a deed of disgraceful notoriety, and final separation; she was not informed how it was wrung from him, as his very heart's blood, by the false statements, of her earnest desire that so it should be. Nay more—her subtle destroyer had gone so far, as to take advantage of his astonishing proficiency in the art of copying, to forge her hand writing—inditing letters in her name, wherein she refused all the entreaties of her family, to arrange a personal interview with any of her friends, that they might, by that means, more surely ascertain her real sentiments on the subject.

Fitz Hugh had given her none of the letters which, as a last effort to save her from a further life of infamy, they had addressed to the unfortunate Sybil. No, she knew nothing—heard nought, but convincing arguments that she was forsaken—cast off—the shame and abhorrence of all those who once so fondly—proudly idolized her—Even *he*, her once adoring husband, loathed her remembrance, wished but for the moment which would deprive her even of his name. And again the wretched creature had sunk into the depths of despairing apathy, and resigned herself, apparently passive victim to her fate.

Much suspense and delay attended the passing of the bill of divorce, and Fitz Hugh suffered much anxiety, lest the business should not be definitively accomplished within the necessary time, for the establishment of the legitimacy of his child; especially as it was his aim that the infant's birth might take place beneath his uncle's roof. For remembering his former easily acquired influence over the old man, he feared not any difficulty in effecting an entrance into Castlerosse, and consummating the reconciliation through the medium of his intended heir. In the mean time, Fitz Hugh eagerly endeavored to soothe the troubled mind of the miserable Sybil; enduring with patience and forbearance, repulsion and coldness, such, perhaps, as man never before encountered—For his

"Cheerings of comfort fell on her ear  
Like deadliest words that were curses to hear."

And she strove not to veil the sentiments they inspired.

Giving way to every feeling of anguish which so sorely smarted at her heart, she scrupled not, even in his presence, to call aloud, in tones of despair, upon her husband's—her children's names. But though these sounds would cause him to grind his teeth, and excite all the fierce passions of his soul, yet still, even



then, he triumphed over his bitterly hated rival, and only became strengthened in his determination, for until all was fulfilled, his revenge would not be sated.

To himself, how torturing it had been, to see her love another, and now in his turn, Albert, with tenfold anguish, would behold his wife—his *very* wife—the wife of another. Sometimes, perhaps, there would rise before his memory's eye, in direct contrast to his present dull—joyless—loveless companion, sunk in the silent, heavy gloom of hatred and despair, that bright, fair young being, with her ardent devotion glowing on her cheek, and kindling into brightness, the soft languor of her azure eye.—Where was she now, with the flowing yellow hair, once his admiration and delight? What was she now! A thing he scarcely dared to think upon, mouldering in an ignoble and nameless grave.

Yet strange to say, with the pertinacity with which a man of a resolute mind, and strong passions, clings “to the cherished madness” of his life, all those remembered charms, awoke not a pang of regret, that he had abandoned this bright gem in order to grasp his present prize. No! the young Irish girl, Norah, had been but as a transient gleam of beauty, whilst Sybil Lennard was the priceless jewel which had mocked his possession from his earliest years; and though when at length gained, its radiance was soon dimmed—its beauty disfigured—still it was his, his own, and he was content!

And now, after this long digression, we return to Sybil, as described in the commencement of the present chapter, on the morning which was to set a new seal upon her destiny. All was finally arranged, and we find her seated, awaiting the bridegroom, to lead her forth to her second nuptials, which were to be celebrated in the English chapel at—

Fitz Hugh at length entered, and approached her—she arose and stood before him.

“Hardress,” she said in a deep, hollow voice, fixing her large, dark eyes upon his face, with an expression which could scarcely fail to make even his dauntless spirit quail, “remember that the guilt of this day’s mockery, is not of my own seeking, and that nothing but the consciousness, that it is utterly useless, to struggle against the unholy power, which it seems ordained that you should be allowed to exercise over my wretched fate, and my despair, and recklessness for the future, which induces me to resign myself to the step I am about to take—nought else—no, not even for the unfortunate being to be born. I tell you that my heart and soul are, and ever will be, another’s! I never ceased to love *him*, though a brief delirium made me rush into the abyss, which has engulfed my body and soul—my every hope of happiness, here and hereafter. I tell you, Hardress, that the vows you will hear me this day pronounce, must be words sounding like curses on my ears, and from which my soul will shrink with abhorrence.”

“Madam, it is enough,” interrupted Fitz Hugh, “more is unnecessary: you know my sentiments on the subject of this day’s formula, and the reason which alone makes it, to me, a matter of importance. All I have now to say is, that

I would have you beware, after this morning’s business, lest you awake my fiercer nature, by too far trying the patience, which my love for you at present enables me to endure; for my hatred you would find as terrible, as my love seems to have become. Beware of arousing my jealousy—my vengeance, against the man I detest—for I swear to you,” and the Irishman’s tall, athletic form appeared to breathe threatening defiance as he spoke, while fire shot from his eyes, “it will be drawing destruction upon *his* head, and you will be his destroyer.”

The unhappy woman shrunk back, shuddering at his words, her countenance changing to terror. A smile of satisfaction passed over Fitz Hugh’s face, as he felt the power he still possessed, of holding in abeyance her maddening manifestations of aversion towards himself, and affection for another.

“Come, then, my Sybil!” he continued, “you have certainly not deigned to honor our nuptials by a toilette of great bridal splendor, but no less beautiful are you in my eyes. Matured devotion, such as mine, requires no such adornments.—Never, Sybil, I declare to you,” and the tone of light mockery in which he commenced his speech, changed to deep earnestness, “never did man with more sincere delight, bestow upon the love of his heart, a share in his name, though, by every means, it is your endeavor to show forth your feelings of contempt and hatred for me. Does not the strength and constancy of my love deserve some slight return—some forbearance at least? Ah! Sybil, remember the cottage garden at Oakleigh—remember the tears you shed at the fictitious woes I then recited—will you not now have pity on me?”

“Hardress!” cried the wretched Sybil, raising her hands with frenzied agony to heaven, “why this cruel mockery! My brain burns with fiery torture when visited by such racking memories, of innocence, peace and joy. Oh, that this form of mine had been a thing of natural horror when first your eyes lit upon it, or that the foul taint of leprosy might now fall upon it, and turn your love to loathing and disgust—that you might leave me for ever! For I tell you,” she continued, with vehement agitation, “were I to see you dying at my feet, and were told that one look, one thought of tenderness would save you, I could not summon it to your aid; whilst my never-ending love for *him* is twined round my heart strings—yes, love unchanged, though truly you have cause, Hardress, to doubt my words—but it could not have been love for another that urged me to leave him—it was madness—yes, *truly* madness!”

But then she paused, and as a gasping suppliant, exclaimed, “Forgive me, Hardress—forgive me!” for she saw an expression of such demoniacal vengeance illumine his countenance, that in her mind’s eye, Albert lay bleeding at her feet a mangled corpse. Hardress recovering his composure, merely coldly pronounced the word, “Remember!” and led forth his victim.

It seems scarcely possible to imagine a person, under any circumstances, able to stand at the marriage altar, a *second* time, without feelings of very peculiar emotion. Though the

divider, *Death*, may have long since set free the heart, as well as the hand—still must not those same exhortations—those same vows, that first thrilled upon the heart, and trembled upon the lip—painfully sound upon the ear, as images and recollections of the past, irrepressibly rise up before the mind? But when *crime*—not death—has severed the holy bands, and conferred the freedom to celebrate anew that holy rite, what must be the feelings then called forth in the breast of its votaries—if, indeed, feelings of any ameliorating sort remain? Even though guilty passions may still hold their dominion in the heart, must not the sting of shame, at least flush the brow, and bow the head at every word pronounced, which causes them to feel the mockery, such solemn professions must appear from their lips, to those who hear them. Surely if a scruple is sometimes raised against the consistency of reading the beautiful burial service of our church, equally over the grave of the hardened criminal and the pious Christian, a prejudice may as conscientiously be excited, against the abuse of the marriage service, being allowed to those who, having violated all the vows and obligations of that holy state, *dare* to come again for purposes most unholy—or at any rate far remote from those the ritual enjoins, to all those who enter into that “honorable estate.”

In the case of Sybil, how direful must have been the contrast of these her second nuptials to those of her early, innocent days—truly had she not been too much stunned by misery for outward events to fall with vividness upon it—her soul must have been filled with overpowering remembrances.

The clergyman being possessed of a tolerably correct knowledge of the circumstances... under which the remarkable looking couple stood before him, bestowed no more of the sacred service upon them, than he probably considered they either desired or deserved, nor seemed to heed that the livid lips of the bride uttered no sound, as with a wild, fixed stare, her eyes were fastened upon his face during the ceremony. The bridegroom performed his part with the careless *insouciance* of a person executing some mere point of legal business. His eyes, however, flashed, and an expression of great interest lighted up his countenance, when, having inscribed his own signature in the register... then placed the pen in the hand of his bride, and made her understand she was to do the same... he stooped down and gazed upon the spot on which the names of “Hardress Fitz Hugh” and “*Sybilla Devereux*” stood side by side.

“Oh, that the eyes of Albert Lennard could also rest upon those signatures!” was his inward aspiration.

#### CHAPTER XXXV.

At length I saw a lady — standing there,  
A daughter of the Gods, divinely tall,  
And most divinely fair.  
Her loveliness, with shame and with surprise,  
Froze my swift speech. — *TENNISON.*

Born in bitterness  
And nurtured in convulsion. — *BYRON.*

ON a stormy October night, the small domestic

establishment of Castlerosse, was disturbed from their evening meal, by a violent knocking and ringing at the outer gate of entrance.

“Och! now couldnt I swear, but that was the young master?” exclaimed the old housekeeper to her companion Dennis, after they had laid down their knives and forks, and looked at each other for a minute in silent inquiry.

“The Saints forbid!” replied the steward, turning pale, as visions of nights of riot and wassail, on which occasions he was required to act *Major Domo*, rose before him in dread array. “But no! he’s in foreign parts with his lady: besides, he has nothing to hope for here, but to be kicked out... at least if my Lord keeps his word; and when his Lordship *does* arouse himself— But there it is again!” and Dennis went out with the lights, followed by servants, the house-keeper murmuring to herself,

“Sure its either him or the Orangemen, and so that he does not bring his lady with him, he’s welcome to come, to save us from being murdered in our beds some of these nights.”

Now the Castle’s Lord had heard the sound also in his den, and the vague idea did flit across his drowsy brain, that it might be as the old woman suspected; but the faint notion died away ere his mind had time to comment on the chance of such a circumstance, or conceive any feeling whatever on the subject. It only had the effect of awakening him to the agreeable remembrance of the whisky toddy, which he stood forgotten on the table by his side. Therefore it was with as much surprise to his senses as if no previous warning had been given, that he heard other steps than the sober tread of old Dennis approaching the apartment, and saw the door open with less of the quiet subservience and respectful fear of disturbing him, than was generally used.

Lord Castlerosse turned peevishly round; the spoon he had been on the point of carrying to his lips was suspended half way, but when his eye fell upon the wild, not-to-be-mistaken figure, which, without any sign of ceremony or distrust, appeared before him, he rose from his seat with as much dismay as if the Evil One himself stood in his presence.

“Dennis! Dennis!” he cried, in a louder and more energetic voice than had been heard from him for many a day.

“My worthy uncle,” began the nephew.

“Sir!” interrupted the Earl, “be so good as to leave this room—this house, before I am under the necessity of fulfilling my word, and making my servants show you the door. Yes, sir, though I am infirm, I am not going to be bullied into receiving a profligate, dishonorable libertine—who—who—”

The unwonted exertion and excitement exhausted the feeble man’s powers, and he was forced to pause for breath, as his nephew probably expected, for he had waited with the most perfect *sang froid*; but now looking towards the door, said,

“Lord Castlerosse, Mrs. Fitz Hugh... my wife is here. We should not have intruded so abruptly upon you, but really there was no alternative—no other room in the house into which



I could take her, and she is terribly tired, after a stormy voyage and long journey."

"And what made you come here at all, after the communication you received from me?" exclaimed the Earl, staring with still greater surprise and dismay at the new piece of information conveyed by the last speech. "If you have had the impudence to bring her too, take her to the Castlerosse Arms; she will be as well accommodated there, as in this house, at any rate. I will not have you thrust upon me either yourself or your—Dennis—Dennis—"

"Well, Sir," interrupted Hardress, "here is Mrs. Fitz Hugh—if it be your pleasure to turn her out of doors, at this time, of night, and in this weather, a woman overcome with fatigue, and in her critical situation, there's no help for it; but perhaps you will allow her to seat herself by the fire, at least for a time."

Before the bewildered eyes of Lord Castlerosse stood the tall, stately form of a lady, who, supported by a female attendant, had entered with slow and feeble steps, but who now stopped short, and turned her eyes with wild bewilderment around; the deep flush with which weakness and exhaustion had tinged her cheeks, imparting to the former an almost dazzling brightness.

Lord Castlerosse had been, in his time, an enthusiast on the subject of woman's beauty; and though his many years of seclusion from the world, had dimmed his admiring remembrance... of loveliness which he had formerly delighted to behold, with the eye of a *connoisseur*... the sight which now presented itself to his gaze, seemed at once to strike upon the nearly broken string, and overpower him for the moment with its thrilling effect; for with open eyes and mouth he stood, as if suddenly fascinated with awe-struck surprise and admiration, before this apparition, which at first sight might well have struck the beholder, as the embodiment of the "might and majesty of loveliness" not of the weakness—the abjectness, of crime blighted—conscience-stricken misery.

Hardress Fitz Hugh smiled covertly at this—to him—amusing and gratifying effect, produced upon his eccentric relative, and still more as he watched the old Lord, when recalled from his first trance of bewilderment, to the consciousness that a beautiful woman actually stood before him. With a confused and annoyed air, he glanced first at his whiskey, then down upon himself, as if awakened to the recollection of his not over-cleanly garb. He adjusted, in confusion, his red night-cap, and with embarrassed but respectful solicitude, stammered out that he invited Mrs. Fitz Hugh to be seated, and expressed his regret that he was not better prepared to receive her.

Mrs. Fitz Hugh moved her lips as if to thank him; her eyes had first concentrated their bewildered gaze upon the old man's face, and then were suddenly lowered, as if by a quick impulse of the deepest shame—she could have sunk to the ground before him.

But Hardress approached, and led her to a seat by the fire; then turning to his uncle, demanded, with great coolness, whether he might

give orders for a room to be prepared for Mrs. Fitz Hugh.

"Of course!" growled his Lordship, apparently recalled by his tone and countenance to the full recollection of all the circumstances of the case. "Dennis!" for the steward in obedience to the vehement summons he had received, was also present at this scene—"Dennis, let the lady have what she requires for the night's accommodation."

Fitz Hugh himself left the room with Dennis—and the maid who had accompanied the travellers—to superintend the proper fulfilment of this order, and to give more minute directions concerning it. Lord Castlerosse and his guest were consequently left alone together. For a moment or two a dead silence reigned. The Earl, from his arm-chair, with more of annoyance and less of respect, glanced towards his companion. She was seated on the opposite side of the large turf fire, but with none of that majestic dignity with which Lord Castlerosse had at first been so much struck. As if shrinking from his sight, her head bowed upon her bosom, and rocking herself backward and forward, she now looked the personification of humiliation.

The Earl having been for so many years isolated from man, had almost forgotten what it was to feel for anything but himself; still, with all the wild libertinism of his earlier days, he had ever possessed a heart—if not that of a Christian, at least of a man not wholly callous to the sight of suffering, especially when a woman was in the case. It was a very uncomfortable sensation, which gradually filled his breast as he contemplated this comprehensive picture before him. He began to wish that it had really been a shameless Dalila "bedecked, ornate, and gay," calculated to excite his disgust and spleen, that had been thus thrust before his sight. The demeanor of the unfortunate woman awoke, in the torpid mind of the Earl, a train of thoughts and feelings which, when summed up, agreed that a wretched, blighted being, overpowered by a sense of an incurable misfortune, was in his presence—and *that* being—the daughter of his old and once most dear friend—the only man who had retained a place in his rusted affections. And then again the suggestion flashed upon his perception, that he himself was a cause, although a remote one, of all this ruin—for had he not introduced the serpent who had effected admittance into that nest of felicity? He must really exert himself to say something kind and encouraging.

"Madam," he began, "I am afraid you are fatigued by your journey—had a stormy voyage I believe I heard it said."

Sybil lifted up her face, and fixed her eyes upon the speaker for a moment with such a look of wildness, that it froze his tongue into silence; and his uneasiness increased, when having glanced fearfully round the apartment, she started up, and approaching Lord Castlerosse, said in a hollow voice,

"Believe me, it is not of my own free will that I thus intrude my shame and my misery

upon you. I know that no honorable house can receive me but with pollution."

"Madam," interposed his lordship, "much as I may regret the circumstances which have occurred, yet, your being the daughter of my friend, Mr. Devereux——"

"Oh, Merciful God!—my father's friend—my father's friend!" exclaimed the miserable Sybil, "and I stand thus before my father's friend!" and burning tears trickled down her cheeks.

"Madam, pray do not agitate yourself—what is passed cannot be recalled, however much to be deplored—whilst under my roof, I trust——"

To his great relief, his nephew's voice being heard on the stairs, his wife shrunk back into her seat. Fitz Hugh, however, did not immediately enter, and from the tones in which he was holding forth, and the occasional expressions which reached the listening ears of one at least—for the lady scarce seemed to hear the sound—the strongest terms of anger and denunciations belonging to the English and Irish vocabulary, were put in requisition. It was evident that his cholera was highly excited, but at length he appeared—his face still inflamed with rage—but his countenance expressing triumph, and he was followed by refreshments, of which—having pressed his wife to partake, who first loathingly turned from their sight, then reluctantly acceded to his importunity—Hardress sat down and made a hearty repast; talking to his uncle as he proceeded, with all the ease of one who feels himself a most welcome and beloved visitor.

After some considerable delay, it was announced to Mrs. Fitz Hugh that her apartment was ready for her reception, and thither Hardress escorted her.

"You must not expect, Sybil," he said, "to find yourself surrounded by many signs of civilization and refinement; you must remember that you are in wild Ireland, otherwise the accommodation and attendants provided for you, may strike you as not a little uncouth."

But too powerfully overcome by mental and bodily pain, and exhaustion, his wretched companion seemed to care little for aught surrounding her. No attendants, indeed, pressed their offices, though one or two barefooted, scantily clad servant girls, crossed their path; who paused in the midst of their voluble talk—carried on in their outlandish sounding dialect—to turn a most curious, and not over respectful glance on "his honor's lady," in whose service they had been called from their beds to officiate, with the comforting intimation from the housekeeper, that she had no fancy to have her brains knocked out by Mr. Hardress, or she wouldn't have stirred a finger to make such a one as *her* a place in the pig-stye even.

And then every epithet which the Irish language affords for the abuse of a woman of evil report, had issued from the lips of the old bed-dame—in application to that being, towards whom, but so short a time before, the highest in the land felt that sort of undefinable deference, created by the halo of Diana-like chastity, which seemed to surround the young wife.

The Irish people of the lower class, whatever may be their failings, have certainly one great

redeeming characteristic—it is, a strong moral sense of that last named attribute; the seventh commandment, indeed, appearing to usurp in their consideration, the place which it would be well that the sixth more largely shared. It was against a manifestation of this spirit in his worthy country-woman—the old housekeeper—that Hardress had so fiercely contended, before he could prevail on her to set about preparations for his wife's accommodation. At first she had stoutly and pertinaciously refused to "stir a finger," for any such like creature his honor might choose to bring to disgrace his Lordship's house. And even Dennis gravely evidenced his concurrence in these sentiments, till at length both were forced to flinch beneath the terrible and menacing fury of their formidable young master; and muttering—that if the lady were now really his lawful wife, it did make some difference—the unwilling dame had departed, though with no very good grace, to attend to the fulfilment of his directions; the result of which was the preparation of the most habitable chamber of which the old Castle could boast, for the admission of one, who truly stood in need of some comfort and repose.

And what a chamber was this for the luxuriantly nurtured Sybil! Large and lofty were its dimensions—the loosely fastened panels of the many windows shaking and clattering from the night's storm. A large old-fashioned bed—its draperies composed of what once had been handsome crimson damask, stood in the middle of the room, being the only furniture, save a few crazy chairs and a rickety table. Cobwebs hung in undisturbed tranquility from every direction of this sombre-looking couch, and a hastily constructed peat fire, filled the apartment with smoke, which yielded a most suffocating smell.

Sybil, however, heeded it not, and Hardress, after depositing her in this domicile under the care of her maid—a respectable middle-aged woman, returned to Lord Castlerosse, whom he found, although it was then past eleven o'clock, more widely awakened by all the strange and stirring events of the evening, than he had probably been for many a day; though on his nephew's re-appearance, he plainly intimated his wish to Dennis, to retire for the night without further delay.

But Fitz Hugh suffered not his uncle to depart, before he had striven to impress upon his mind, several points on which he wished him to possess a clear and right understanding. He informed the Earl that the lady he had introduced into the castle, had been united to him in the lawful bands of matrimony, and placed the certificate in his hands, adding whilst he did so, that consequently the child, shortly to be born, would possess a legitimate claim to his family name, and—if it so pleased his Lordship—his inheritance! Might it not, he urged, be made a convenient stop-gap, to much of the troublesome business, he knew his uncle had drawn on his lawyers by the withdrawal of his former intentions towards his unworthy self, and the consequent transfer of his favor to the female branches of the family; added to the difficulty of distinctly ascertaining which of the numerous distant



claimants for the property, had the best right to the heirship. He was not discouraged by the manner in which these considerations were received by Lord Castlerosse, though the strongest effect apparently produced on the mind of his Lordship, was unfeigned horror at the prospect of the event which they announced; for turning to Dennis, who, by Fitz Hugh's desire, had remained in the room, he enquired, in a tone which expressed his extreme consternation—"where the lady had been lodged," and seemed relieved when informed of the distant locality of the chamber assigned to her use.

But even this circumstance could not save him from some of the much dreaded inconvenience, attendant on that same event; for before the night was over, the Castle was in a state of panic and bustle, such as could not have failed to disturb the rest of the seven sleepers themselves. There was banging of doors—shrill calls—shuffling of feet up and down the corridors—all the house being called up to assist in the exigency of the case, in an establishment so ill prepared for a catastrophe of that kind; for who, among the inmates of Castlecrosse, twelve hours before could have imagined the possibility of such a sound as the cry for the *accoucheur*, being heard in the dwelling of the venerable bachelor recluse?—but so it was. Some weeks were still waiting to the period, when the birth of Fitz Hugh's child might be expected; but it was only very natural that all the fatigue and wretchedness which the unhappy Sybil had endured, should hasten the event; and after but a few hours of much required rest, she awoke to feel that her time of trial had arrived—that time of fearfulness and trembling, and horrible dread to every woman—even to the happy soul who hails it but as a light affliction, leading to joy and blessedness so intense, that when passed away it will be forgotten, or only remembered as a dream. The prosperous and the innocent must feel at such a moment the snares of death encompass her round about, and the pains of hell get hold upon her—with hope and love, and promised bliss, to buoy up her fainting spirit—she yet must feel that no human hand can uphold, no human aid, comfort, or refresh, whilst passing through this dark vale of suffering.

What then must be the bitterness of this cup of trembling to her, who has no draught of sweetness to allay its agony through the dreary darkness of this road of sorrow—no ray of love or joy to light up its fearful gloom? And such was now the fate of the unfortunate Sybil. In a strange country, surrounded by unknown faces, and with the pangs of memory rending her sinking frame, with mental torture, far above all bodily anguish—the recollections of parallel events, mocking her with images of times past, which came before her as dreams of heaven in comparison to the gnawing torments of this present suffering—her groans—her cries, were truly the shrieks of despair—and the light of day arose and set again before her child of shame and guilt was born into the world; and when the feeble cry of the babe smote upon the mother's ears, how was it received!—by a father's blessing?—No—a father's curse. A deep curse burst from the lips of Fitz

Hugh on his being informed that a daughter was born unto his name; and when it was added that there seemed little hope of the infant living many hours, his answer was—

"So much the better!"

At the same moment, the instinctive feeling of a mother seemed to awaken in the wretched Sybil's breast, in defence of the babe she had brought forth in pain and sorrow; and when it was taken to her bed side, she stretched forth her feeble arms to receive it into her bosom, that at least in a mother's embrace it might breathe forth its little soul. But when she felt the infant in her arms, and gazed upon its face, associations fraught with agony so completely overwhelmed her, that groaning, with a shudder, she turned away her head, and suffered it to be removed, in order that Father Patrick, as the old nurse encouragingly said, might make a Christian of the child before it went to Paradise.

Now Father Patrick, as may be supposed, was the priest of the village, and of the inhabitants of the Castle also—for though its Lord was nominally a Protestant, no rival brother of that persuasion had ever been established as an interloper in his parish, which was accordingly as purely Roman Catholic as it could be.

On hearing of the event at the Castle, he considered it his duty to attend in case of any critical emergency, which might require his spiritual aid; and of course on hearing of the precarious state of the newly-born babe, he suggested the necessity of its immediate admittance into the Holy Church. All was therefore made ready for the sacred ceremonial in the chamber where lay the mother; nothing more was required but to decide on the name; the request was therefore whispered to Sybil that she should mention one.

She put her hand to her head; her weakness and exhaustion probably bewildering her brain and causing reminiscences of the past to confuse themselves with the present... she murmured with a strange wan smile, illuming her now haggard features...

"Oh, you know... you know," ... and she raised her eyes in the mean time to the wall opposite, as if in search of some object...

"Mary... is it not Mary, Albert?"

But the utterance of that last word seemed to jar with violence some chord of memory, and recall her to a clear consciousness of reality... for she started up with a shriek. The nurse soothingly interposed with...

"Yes, my honey, it shall be Mary... who could wish," she added, crossing herself, "for a prettier or more blessed name?"

"Mary!... no... no call it not Mary... blessed, blessed Mary... but Mara... Mara... bitter!... yes, most bitter!" cried the wretched Sybil, and she covered up her face and groaned.

The poor babe was baptized according to the Roman Catholic ritual in the cold, grey dawn of a stormy morning... the charitable priest choosing, in preference, to endow it with the more common and propitious denomination of "Mary!"

The steward was obliged to attend, with two female servants, as sponsors—the father of the

child declining to be present at a ceremony, which he looked upon as mummery." For the mother, Fitz Hugh often inquired with some anxiety, but the evident disappointment with which Lord Castlerosse received the tidings of the sex of the infant, only increased the spleen and aversion conceived by Hardress against his little daughter. It quite enraged him to see the "small dark misery" lying upon its mother's bosom—for again nature had asserted its all-powerful rights over every other feeling, and won for the babe that place. Nay, it was pressed more closely to her breast when words of disgust escaped the father's lips, as if *his* very hatred made *her* love more warm; and Hardress ceased to trouble much further the lying-in-room with visits evidently so little gratifying to their object. Eagerly sought out by Desmond immediately his arrival at the Castle was ascertained, he was soon engaged, night and day, in interests of a very different nature, and the invalid was left almost entirely to the management of the Irish officials, who had it all their own way; for the foreign maid, a quiet person, strange both to their language and customs, was little able to assert authority, or receive much consideration as an overseer.

Not that there was much cause for complaint as far as the treatment of the patient was concerned. The nurse was a kind, attentive old body, though certainly rather too much of a social turn—for she and her assisting crones would sit over the fire for hours, sipping their whiskey, and presuming on the passive apathy of their charge, to talk and gossip in that low monotonous murmur, more fatiguing to a sick person than conversation in a louder tone.

But after the first few days, during which bodily pain and weakness almost overpowered the exercise of mental emotion of any kind, there succeeded a period of comparative calm to the being who had been for so long tossed upon a sea of tempestuous agony; for apart from the harrowing sensations, which the sight of Fitz Hugh never failed to awaken—little attentive to aught that passed around, she spent her days in a kind of dreamy stupor, in which the realities of the present were absorbed by the heavenly vision of the past, upon which her imagination ranged at will. The babe, which, day after day, contrary to all expectation, continued in existence, though still most sickly in appearance, as it lay still and sleeping by her side, only seemed to contribute to the soothing and softening influence which had gathered round her senses.

Occasionally, however, fearful gleams of light broke through the darkness, which was to her, most blessed obscurity; and these were when Hardress was forced upon her perception, either by his personal presence, or by accidental associations. One night, in a new feature, did such light burst upon her.

Suddenly awaking from a long sleep, her attention was at first carelessly attracted by the conversation going on between the nurse and the house-keeper—for the latter, in spite of all her virtuous prejudices, did not scruple to drop

in at times for a "bit of talk and drop of comfort with nurse Healey."

"Yes, sure its just a twelvemonth gone!" the last named was saying, "since Master Desmond came here, over from England, and brought the young creature's hair for a bit of a keepsake—some long yellow locks—and told them it was all that was left of the poor Hinny—that, she had thrown herself into the water and was drowned and buried; and then they who had cursed their child before, as one they'd never think of, or look upon again, took on sorely. The mother has never looked up since; the father vowed he'd be revenged on Master Fitz Hugh; surely I wouldn't be in his skin if he meets old Mahony on the road—and there's many another who would fain knock our gentleman on the head for the sake of the fair maid, Norah—the flower of Killarney, as they used to call her—her brothers—young Murdock, her lover, and all!"

"Ah, well! neither would I be the lady there," continued the house-keeper, "if its for her Master Fitz Hugh turned the girl off, and drove her to the deed."

"Yes! and that's how they say it was," the other interposed—"the poor body was turned out into the streets. She had always a wild Irish spirit about her—and they pulled her out of the river the next morning, when he was gone 'cross the sea with his new love there, who had left husband, and children, and all, for the sake of his ill-favored face, which it puts her into a fever to look upon, now the mischief's done."

A sudden movement of the invalid now caused them to lower their voices. She had powerfully suspended her breath to catch the whispered words of this communication, which had gradually excited her curiosity—and it seemed as with a vivid flash to throw light upon that which had often since, like the memory of a bewildered dream, floated across her recollection—that spirit-like form in the London abode of Fitz Hugh which had fled past her with that appalling shriek. And now again it seemed to flit before her vision—again in fancy she heard the cry—and more—the very splashing of the water which engulfed another victim of her baleful sin.

That night Sybil was delirious—and the cause of her being so, the nurse laid to any other source than the true one. This attack retarded for some time her recovery; at one time, indeed, her life was despaired of, and it was during that period, she afterwards remembered, in a dim confused manner, that words strange, yet familiar, sounded on her ears—and an object placed before her eyes—fascinating her gaze—both acting as some holy, soothing charm upon her soul.

But with returning physical convalescence, this influence had dispersed; she saw, indeed, occasionally, a man, clad in a dark garb, and with a grave countenance, approach her, and strive to enter into conversation; but her reserve defeated his endeavors.

"She shrank from all, and her silent mood  
Made her wish only for solitude."



## CHAPTER XXXVI.

Oh, in my dreams I feel them—see them—  
The days of bliss return again,  
As victor angels tread beneath  
The snare of fiends, the rage of men,  
And ever more a sweet delusion  
Above my slumber hovers near—  
And tells of holy retribution,  
And chides my doubt and soothes my fear.  
I wake, and all is dark and drear.

I curse my sleep whose magic power  
Hath marked with bliss, my hopeless heart.

A FEW weeks more, and the character of the solitude of Sybil had somewhat changed. Her dreary days for the most part, crept over her head, as she sat with her noble uncle-in-law in his lugubrious den. Hardress Fitz Hugh for the better security—during his now frequent absences—of the respect and observance, it was his pleasure should be shown towards his wife, at once established this apartment as her daily habitation, to which arrangement, Lord Castlerosse having at first tacitly consented, it became a mechanical habit to Sybil, there to resort, and to her companion, to expect her.

She seldom employed herself but generally sat in dark abstracted gloom, with her head bent down—her hand shading her eyes, and hiding the day-light from her sight—her long hair hanging about her face, dishevelled—neglected—or in her more unquiet moods, her tall form rocking to and fro, before the old man's eyes, till the very movement charmed the senses of the Earl into slumber—and when he next awoke, perchance the scene had taken a new surface—There sat still the same figure, but again motionless and rigid, or her movements as gentle, in comparison to her former manner, as the sad waving of the tree by the summer breeze, to that rocked and tossed, by the blast of a winter's storm—for—to the old Lord—strange, puzzling sights—a little baby lay on her knee—his infant great niece—an object, however, which he could at first scarcely believe to be the thing, they called a *baby*—a creature associated in his mind with the epitome of “noyance and unrest” “muling and puling in its nurses arms.”

From its birth might the little stranger have seemed to imbibe the spirit of its dark, sad position, its unwelcome entry into this world of woe, such was the unnatural stillness of its baby-hood. Though sickly in appearance, it never, by its cries, gave sign of any suffering; scarcely ever was the little voice heard, and the arrival of the period when infants begin to take notice, had it not been for something in the expression of the large dark eyes, as they wandered from object to object, and fixed themselves on the fire flames, doubts might have been excited in the minds of those, accustomed to lively children, as to the baby's intellectual perfection.

It was with sentiments of a strange—almost an indescribable nature, that Sybil appeared to regard this little being. Never did she caress it—every source of any such soft tenderness seemed for ever dried up in her stagnated heart. All necessary care was bestowed upon the infant, but no mother's tear of affection ever bedewed its brow—no mother's fond

smile, cast its bright sunshine on the little face.

The deep and mighty shadow of a dark and heavy cloud of sorrow alone fell reflected upon the infant's countenance. It was a sallow complexioned child, with no beauty, save from the large dark eyes, which from their striking size were likely to attract attention; and yet on this tiny creature, Sybil's gaze would be riveted for hours, and none could pierce through the impenetrable shroud of her then settled expression. None could tell of the self torture she was madly inflicting, by the means of this innocent instrument—that in review, were in contrast, passing before her mind's eye the calm, pure features of her fresh born, her Madonna, the serene, heavenly smile of her first Mary, who had gently infused into her heart, maternal love, in its freshest—holiest—softest nature.

Then the splendid infant Sybil, whose lofty and regal beauty, even in her cradle, had let loose, in all its power, the current of a more earthly stream, the mother's *pride*, and then those feelings all condensed in one, of love and pride, and joy ineffable, towards that angel spirit, that cherub face, her boy, her Bertie, her glory, the very image of—

But at that point, that word of her once fond idolatry, the power which can only be compared to that mysterious bewilderment, which restrains the mortal spirit from striving to pierce the hidden things of a world to come; a veil, a thick overpowering veil seemed to spread over her mind, preventing her even in thought from approaching *him*, from whom a gulf of shame and guilt, and misery had separated her.

But this state could scarcely have continued, without at last reaching to a crisis, melancholy madness must inevitably have ensued, if some violent shock had not come to break the fast gathering charm of mental darkness, and restored the unfortunate woman to a clearer understanding of reality—and perception of feeling, a perception more healthy to her mind, and soul, even though its every glimpse was agony unqualified.

Lord Castlerosse had been roused for a time, in no small degree by the late circumstances, even so far as to make many unwonted exertions both mental and bodily, and amongst these, was the act of inditing a letter to Mr. Devereux, informing him of the fact of his daughter being domesticated under his roof, the birth of the child being also slightly mentioned, as a communication which could carry with it, naught but pain and shame. He spoke in terms of compassion and feeling, of the unhappy Sybil, of the signs of penitence and regret, which her spirits and demeanor showed, for in no other way, did Lord Castlerosse know how to lay before her parents, the nature of the strong character of her outward appearance. He ended his epistle by bidding his friend, at least have the consolation of feeling, that the poor lady, as far as his will was concerned, was provided with a respectable home, as long as it was her pleasure, or in her power to remain at Castlerosse.

It was a consolation—though a mournful one, to the afflicted family, to gain this information, as far as the lost one herself was concerned; as for themselves, no tears of penitence or regret, could wash out their bitter grief or the shame—the scorn (for how like to scorn, is the pity of the world) which must for ever be their portion; but it was a kind of solace to them to know, that the once idolized being, to whom their hearts still clung with but too agonizing tenacity, was safe, in person at least, and under reputable and kind protection—not wholly dependent upon her destroyer. Yes, all this was, in some degree, consolation—that species of melancholy solace, which might be felt, on hearing that the corpse of some beloved friend had been discovered, and committed to the sanctity of the tomb; and then it was the governess's part to fulfil the strict injunctions of Albert Lennard, and despatch to Castlerosse all the objects, once the private possessions of his lost wife. It was the effect produced on her by these substantial mementos of the past which worked the change in the bias of her mind.

The dreary winter had scarcely passed, when several packing-cases arrived. Fitz Hugh himself informed her what they contained, and proposed their being opened for her inspection. The character of his present pursuits, and of the society he frequented, was not such as to keep the temper of his mind and heart in any very refined or gentle frame; and he was becoming weary and impatient of the stagnant calm of gloomy inanimation which so hopelessly shrouded his wretched wife; any show of passion, petulance, or hatred even, would have pleased him better than this sullen—dull—unvarying quietude; any of those demonstrations he could have met, and repaid with the same weapons, but for this mood, there was no retaliation. With satisfaction, therefore, he hailed the appearance of these relics of the past, from the supposition their sight could scarcely fail to break—by the pangs of memory—the spell of stern silence, which enthralled her suffering spirit.

With cruel interest he determined himself to watch the working of the experiment upon the victim. The dispatch of the effects had been announced by a letter to Lord Castlerosse, who commissioned his nephew to impart to his wife the intelligence. Fitz Hugh accordingly broke to her the occurrence, in the following manner—

"Sybil! there has been an arrival at the Castle this morning, which concerns you."

She turned her eyes, upon him with a look, speaking but little of interest or inquiry.

"Yes!" Hardress continued, in his tone of scornful ridicule, "with the magnanimous generosity of soul, for which your late husband is so greatly famed, he has sent, as was announced in a letter to my uncle, the personalities you possessed, as his wife—jewels—pictures—clothes, &c., &c."

Sybil suddenly sprung from her seat, and with a wild, eager countenance, stretched out her arms as if to receive them.

"Ah!" Fitz Hugh exclaimed in the same

jesting, bantering tone, "I see it is with you as with all women, there is no resisting the never-failing charm of new, or newly recovered goods. But Mrs. Fitz Hugh, are you quite sure that I can allow you to receive these things! may I not naturally be jealous, that any such appurtenances of your former state should be again in your possession, to revive thoughts and feelings which *ought* at least *now* to be banished for ever from your breast?"

Whilst he spoke, Fitz Hugh continued to fix a penetrating, malicious glance on her countenance, from which, at his words, the transient glow of eagerness and animation vanished, and with tightly clenched hands, and lips pressed together, she gasped despairingly—

"Then why thus cruelly mock me?"

"It was not my intention to do so," returned Fitz Hugh, assuming a colder and more careless tone, "nor have I really any desire to keep from you these things; on the contrary I have given orders for them to be brought up to these rooms, and I myself will assist you in unpacking them."

A flash of something like pleasure had illumined Sybil's features when he first spoke, but at this last sentence, hiding her face in her hands, she murmured in a voice of horror—"Oh no—oh no!"

But the cases were even at that moment carried in, placed before her, and by the command of Fitz Hugh, uncovered and unmatted ere the servants departed. Then Sybil's eyes, which had been following these proceedings with avidity, turned beseechingly towards Hardress, who stood keenly watching her expression of countenance.

"Shall I proceed?" he inquired, "I am sure I shall make a more efficient assistant in the business, than your maid. Why should you object?" he continued, with an air of fierce surprise, as springing forward with a cry, she seized his arm, and then sinking on her knees before the chest, spread her arms over it, as if guarding a holy shrine from his sacriligious approach.

"Do you expect to find aught there which, as *my wife*, I cannot allow you to retain? I tell you, Madam, that is all I have any desire to ascertain; let me therefore proceed in the work, if you wish to be afterwards left in the solitary enjoyment of your recovered treasures."

The miserable being arose with a gesture of despair, retired to a distance, muttering in a hoarse voice—"Well! well—let it be so!" sank upon a chair, and covered up her face, remaining in tortured agony, only to be compared to that which might tear the breast of one, in whose presence some unholy hand was violating the sanctity of the grave of some beloved being.

Fitz Hugh soon wearied of the task he had taken upon himself. He had merely glanced over the contents of each case, jewels, ornaments, books, &c., &c., till at length he came to one, into which he more carefully dived, lingering over the examination of the articles it enclosed. They were pictures, and presently the tortured woman, heard the exclamation burst from his lips—



"What a splendid child!—a perfect study! This one I never saw—quite unlike the hated Lennard stock!"

She could no longer refrain—but sprung to his side, and gazed upon the bold and beautifully executed drawing of her little Sybil; then her eyes wandering over the other portraits that lay there, a change passed over her countenance—she shrieked, "My father—my children!"—and fell to the ground—she had fainted.

A month after this occurrence, Sybil might be found seated alone, with locked doors, gloating in secret as with the jealous avidity of a miser over some hidden treasures. Fitz Hugh had been sufficiently satisfied as to leave her in comparatively unmolested possession of her former belongings. He had first—as he thought—ascertained that no article bearing any visible token of Albert Lennard was amongst them. How mistaken was his idea, when every object seemed to her sense to bear that name written upon it—to breathe alone of him.

But Hardress had seen her kneel at his feet, and with streaming eyes, and hands clasped in supplicating agony, conjure him—for he would still torture her for some time with suspense, pretending to retain jealous feelings towards his rival—hesitating to allow her to keep the dearest relics of her affections—when she besought him not to tear from her ought she found appertaining to her children. With fiendish triumph the man heard her swear, that nothing of *his* should lurk amongst them—that *he* should even be torn from her heart—her broken, bleeding heart—be buried from her memory—even as the sainted dead are hid from the sight of living sinners! She knew that *he* was lost to her—that a gulf as impassable in its character as that which separated the blessed Lazarus from the wretch in torments, divided her from *him* for ever. Fitz Hugh need not fear—the remembrance was branded on her heart and brain, but with too burning a consciousness for the memory to prove aught but despair and madness. But her children—her own children—bone of her bone, flesh of her flesh—they were hers still; no power of guilt could sever that tie. She was torn from them in body, but their images, *their* remembrance might at least remain to her!

And Fitz Hugh suffered it so to be. His original aim had been satisfied by thus awakening her passions and emotions, and thereby breaking the spell of impenetrable gloom which had so long bound the miserable woman.

She now again appeared to him in the light of a woman—one over whom he could hold influence, if not now the influence of love, other powers equally effectual—and, indeed, from this time of her restoration to images of the past, a softening current of feeling seemed to have returned, and this glance of former days brought one great relief—tears—floods of tears!

Yes, day after day, all that smiling spring, when well assured of being safe from the intruding presence of Fitz Hugh, would Sybil often steal to the retirement of her chamber, and feast upon the images of lost delight offered by the pictures of her children—her parents; and other reminiscences there were, trifles mostly, but

which carried most thrilling emotions to her heart, not only from their own intrinsic associations, but because they seemed to tell her that she had not been quite blotted out of the consideration of every former friend—that some sympathising soul had remembered how those trifles—which the careless stranger might have overlooked or neglected—would be to her of ten-fold greater value than the richest jewels which once decked her brow, and which now remained unregarded in their caskets.

Something whispered to her heart—"Felicie, this was your work!" and the heavy shame and gnawing regret, with which she now thought of that early friend, would then drown for a time all other feelings.

Once she sat till the shades of evening were gradually closing on three smiling young faces, on which, in dreamy reverie, her eyes had been for many hours fixed, watching them fading, dimmer and dimmer from her sight. At length she started—a sudden, fiery glow overspread her face, then left her pale as death. She cast her eyes fearfully round the room, and the next moment, with a trembling, hurried step, approached a wardrobe—took a key, and applied it to a box within—a jewel-case, into which she had never looked, since Fitz Hugh, after a cursory examination, had placed it in her possession.

But her present emotion was not caused by this circumstance; indeed she scarcely seemed to remark objects, which at another time might have produced the most vivid sensations—no, it was as if some frightened, guilty thing was, with panting eagerness, searching for some forbidden treasure, alone with the sin and danger of the act about to be committed.

The truth was, a sudden flash of thought had found entrance into her breast, bearing with it recollections, which, by the agitation they excited, contradicted the protestation—the solemn promise she had made to Fitz Hugh. On what could her mind have been brooding, which caused the remembrance that there had been a brooch, with a picture—and of whom? Might it not have been overlooked? She remembered having placed it in that case, when the pin broke, the very day before Albert left her—*for ever*. For one instant her spirits sank; even where it there, what was that to her!—her oath—her oath! Albert was dead to her, she had said. Well—well!—might she not look upon the features of the dead without crime or danger?

And she had found it! She seized it with an hysterical laugh—held it from her, and gazed upon it; but for a moment only—for a voice, "deep and dread," was heard at the door—and with a look of ghastly alarm, her first impulse was to hide the picture in her bosom—then mastering her agitation, she closed the wardrobe—and admitted Hardress Fitz Hugh!

He made no more remark than usual on disturbing her. He knew that such intrusions were ever far from welcome; and, therefore, discovered nothing very singular in Sybil's faltering voice and discomposed countenance.

He seated himself for some time on the sofa by her side, and afterwards led her down stairs

to spend the evening, as usual, in his uncle's apartment—unconscious that she bore in her very bosom, an image so hateful to him.

## CHAPTER XXXVII.

And is there in God's world so drear a place,  
Where the loud bitter cry is raised in vain?  
Where tears of penance come too late for grace,  
As on th' uprooted flower the genial rain?—KEBLE.

This soul hath been  
Alone on a wide, wide sea;  
So lonely 'twas, that God himself  
Scarce seemed there to be.

COLORADOE'S ANCIENT MARINER.

The last two lines, figuratively speaking, were truly applicable to our heroine, when having plunged into the abyss of sin, beheld the quicksand of despair closing round her soul. We have seen her now, indeed, under the influence of the new and exciting dreams with which the fevered imagination invested the empty images of the past with something like restoration to reality. But this dream must wear away; the time must come when she would awake to light, worse than the darkness which had before oppressed her every power of hope—of feeling—and which would leave her in all the gnawing, parched, yearning longing, after the substantiation of that bliss—lost for ever! And how would she pass through that fiery furnace—she, unhappy soul, whose heart cast recklessly and despairingly away, every thought which could bring with it help or hope from a higher source? In her ear seemed mockingly to ring the awful words—"Her God has forsaken *her*—persecute and take *her*—for there's none to help *her*."

"She looked to Heaven, and tried to pray,  
But ever as prayer had gush'd  
A wicked whisper came and made  
Her heart as dry as dust."

So, indeed, she might have cried, as day after day, month after month, passed over her head, and left her prayerless—destitute of all divine relief or hope; and with regard to outward means, she could not have been more unfortunately situated for the furtherance of such a deplorable state of mind. She longed to scorn all belief, both in outward form and inward principle, and no form was presented to her view, save the devotional rites of the few uneducated domestics, with whom she came in contact, which to one so ignorant of all appertaining to the Roman Catholic Church, could appear, as no more belonging to religion, than the worship of the Hindoo or the Brahmin. But was it not strange—it may be thought—that a Catholic Priest should be constantly in the very house, and yet so little zealous in his calling, as to suffer this new inmate of the Castle to live for so long a period without any efforts to bring her under his influence, save those baffled attempts at fixing her attention on the consolations of his religion when she was upon her sick and apparently dying bed.

Father O'Brian had been ever since that time far from unmindful of this "sheep without a pasture," which had wandered into the precincts of his fold—far from remiss in his earnest wish

to bring her within its guardian shelter—not with that spirit too generally predominant amongst his fraternity, that desire, "the compassing sea and land to make one proselyte," but rather "the saving of a soul alive!"

He had failed—for alas! we may truly call "the children of this world wiser than the children of light," in piercing the difficulties surrounding the accomplishment of his desire, through which his predecessor, Father Connell, would have worked his way with as little scruple and difficulty as the snake penetrates the thickets. This man had been lately transported for certain seditious practices in which he had been implicated.

Obstacles, proceeding both from her imperious reserve, and the difficulty of gaining access to Mrs. Fitz Hugh's presence, had hitherto impeded every attempt of Father O'Brian. From the domicile of Lord Castle-rosse, in which she passed most of the day, he was strictly excluded; the very name of a Priest had been rendered too obnoxious to the Earl by the conduct and character of Connell, and never, till late in the spring succeeding her arrival in Ireland, did Sybil leave the precincts of the Castle—when, with shrinking form and downcast eyes, she occasionally crept abroad, forced to do so by the positive orders of Fitz Hugh, who declared his unwillingness to have such a perfectly smoke-dried wife, and testified his surprise that she should show so little soul as to evince no desire to behold the natural beauties of the vicinity, whose description had once so raised her enthusiasm. On these occasions he generally was her companion—his presence forming an effectual barrier against the approach of any gentle spirit of holiness and sanctity.

In the summer time, however, Sybil, more used to the at first intolerable glare of light and sunshine, and still more the endurance of human scrutiny and observation, would sometimes ramble out alone, choosing the most solitary haunts—spurning all interchange of word or look with any one; and at length her remarkable appearance and demeanor began to excite such superstitious awe amongst the country people, who chanced to pass her by, that their respectful greeting of "God save your honor!" was exchanged for a silent crossing of themselves, and a mental abjuration on their own score.

One evening, in a fit of gloomy abstraction, she had wandered farther from home than usual—had even reached the lovely vicinity of Kilarney, when a violent storm forced her to seek for shelter. A cottage was near of most picturesque position—humble, but of a less poor description than the generality of those Irish abodes. At the door of this she reluctantly craved admission. A young man who was standing gazing moodily on the storm without, immediately—though with sullen scrutiny—made way for her to enter, and Sybil found herself suddenly in a larger and different company, to that she had expected!

An elderly woman lay upon a bed—fast approaching death marked upon her features. A girl, with her head buried in her hands—her



long hair falling about her face, sat on the foot of the bed, while by its side was kneeling a dark figure, whom Sybil recognized as the Priest. A grey-headed man was also seated near, and with the young man at the door, completed the group.

"I am intruding," murmured Mrs. Fitz Hugh, in the deep, hollow voice which had become natural to her, as each turned an eager glance upon her, whilst her disturbed, wild look plainly showed, how little more agreeable to herself was this intrusion.

But it is seldom, whatever may be the time or season, that inhospitable looks or signs greet a stranger beneath an Irish roof. The grey-headed man bowed his head quickly, as he pushed a chair towards her, and the Priest, with a grave bow of recognition, advancing, said, "Madam, you will perhaps join in the rites about to be administered, for the soul of a dying fellow creature."

A bewildered stare from the dark eyes of Sybil was the only answer, as she declined the proffered seat, and took her place at the doorway, which the young man had now left vacant. There she remained, whilst the priest proceeded with the service, which her entrance had interrupted. Unconsciously did she watch the scene, whilst the tones of Father O'Brian's voice fell quietly upon her ear—even amidst the war of the thunder and splashing of the rain, now falling in torrents. But when the voice ceased, and the Priest arose from his knees, the storm had temporarily abated into a calm, and the faint, low accents of the dying woman made themselves distinctly heard. "Father!" she murmured, "take this heavy weight from my heart, and let me die in peace—Where is it?" she said, and she feebly placed her hand on her bosom, and drew forth some long, light tresses—pressed them to her lips—once more gazed with her dim eyes upon them, and then holding her treasure towards the Priest, faltered,

"Take it—take it, and let me feel, if my heart will be any lighter."

Father O'Brian held out his hand, murmuring some words of comfort, enforcing the necessity of casting off all sublunary thoughts: but the young man abruptly sprung forward.

"Give it to me, mother," he cried; "let Murdock have it now, as a token from you, and he'll soon do that which will bring you peace,"—his eyes flashed fiercely—"When Norah's blood calls out for blood, no wonder the spirit's troubled. If I had not sworn to Murdock, not to take his vengeance from him, it had been done before this—and you'd have been at rest."

"No—no!" said the dying woman, "man's blood will not save my Norah—my child, who died unshriven; no prayers for her soul—no masses. Lost! soul and body!"

The priest rebuked the young man for his unreasonable violence, reminding him of the words—"Vengeance is mine saith the Lord, and I will repay it."

"May he repay it now then," said the young man, doggedly, as he cast a side-long glance at Sybil. "If He's the righteous judge, as you say, Father O'Brian, He'll never keep it back much longer."

A choking, gasping sound now broke in upon their ears, not from the dying woman, but the stranger at the door. They turned to look, but though the elements were again raging furiously, she had gone forth from amongst them.

Half an hour after, the priest left the cottage, having seen the eyes of Norah's mother closed in death, and the mourners left in the short period of quiet, soon to be broken by the wild funeral wail, over the remains of the departed.

The Holy Father had not proceeded far, ere he beheld leaning against a tree a tall figure, which he soon discovered was Mrs. Fitz Hugh. Providentially, the late storm had subsided, or her position would have been most dangerous. She was pale as death, and the priest almost imagined it was a glare of insanity he marked in her eye, as she met his gaze. He proffered her his escort to her home. Starting up, she made a confused explanation and walked on, Father O'Brian keeping by her side.

"Daughter," he said, "my duty is to relieve the heavy burdened, by those consolations which our religion has provided, and though you, I believe, acknowledge not the authority of our Holy Mother Church, yet suffer me, in the name of Him, by whom all Christians are united, to inquire whether there is no spiritual aid which your depressed soul desires?"

"And could you, Sir," his companion quickly answered, turning upon him her wild gaze, "could you quiet the spirit of that dying woman, by hopes of the soul's salvation of her lost, wretched child? No! and as fruitlessly—were my sorrowing friends now ranged round at this very moment—could you impart to their hearts one ray of hope for mine. I tell you my soul is lost! if not by the deadly sin which first destroyed me, it would be dragged down to the pit of perdition by the despairing misery which now engulfs it."

"Norah Mahony," the priest replied, "died without the pale of that salvation our Church provides. She cast herself and her sin, unabridged, into that place where for her there is no repentance. The mercy of God is fathomless, but for such determined sinners our Church can hold forth no certain hope. You, daughter, still possess a soul to save; beware, then, lest by willfully hugging the chains of darkness which now enslave you—by rejecting the hand held out to the contrite sinner, you plunge your soul into everlasting perdition, and even in this life the sentence go forth, that you may find no place for repentance, though you seek it carefully and with tears."

"And where seek it now?" cried Sybil, despairingly; "I, with my heart so desolate—I, who can but grovel in the dust—I, who cannot pray, can only weep fruitless, unrelieving tears of earthly longings—what can now lift me up?"

"This, daughter," and the priest took a crucifix from his bosom, and pausing, raised, it above his eyes. "I ask you not," he said, as instinctively the Protestant shrank back, "I ask you not to look upon this as more than the symbol of your salvation. Cling in faith to the cross, whereon the God of sinners died, ere you can hope to rise pardoned and absolved from all your sins. Stain not its glory by fruit-

less, crushing remorse; if you truly hate and bewail the sin with which you confess you are so heavily laden, bear with resignation and patience, its natural punishment, but scourge yourself with penances and mortifications, which even your Church (though alas! the practice is decayed) professes to hold forth to sinners such as you: thus being purified in this world, your soul may be saved in the day of the Lord."

It was by such discourses that Father O'Brian arrested the mind of Sybil on the subject of religion, and having once succeeded in gaining this point, he relaxed not in his efforts. The temporary absence of Fitz Hugh favored the purpose, and from conversations in her walks, he before long even obtained access to her in the Castle. Great were the consequent changes to the mind of the unhappy being. A state of religious excitement succeeded—fanaticism it might rather be called; which even outran the benevolent and truly pious O'Brian's ideas and enforcements of self-mortification. Fortunate indeed was it that she had fallen into the hands of one, whose superior and enlightened mind rose above the bigotry and superstition which have led to so many abuses in his religion! In this case the penitent was curbed rather than urged, into the blind zeal with which she would fain have quenched the agonies of remorse—scourging her hated sin by violence of bodily chastisement—fasting, and penance of every kind.

A month or two after the cottage scene, Fitz Hugh, as occasionally the fancy seized him, made Sybil accompany him on a walk to some picturesque spot. One particular evening, their steps were bent, towards the banks of Killarney, and in the course of the excursion they drew near to the dwelling of the Mahonys. A shudder shot through the frame of Mrs. Fitz Hugh as it caught her sight, and suddenly complaining of fatigue she expressed a wish to turn back, but Hardress, whose eye had been arrested by the same object, said that the most advisable plan would be, for her to enter the cottage and rest there awhile, and he attempted to draw her on—with firmness however she resisted his efforts.

Hardress asked her with a laugh, and a scrutinizing look, what she knew about that cottage to cause her to fear it thus, adding that he had a particular fancy for a nearer view of the picturesque object; she might therefore await his return.

He was about to proceed, when Sybil caught her husband's arm, exclaiming in a tone of sorrow "Hardress! if devouring remorse does not restrain you, from insulting the inmates of that abode by your intrusion, let at least your own personal safety, weigh in the balance."

For when Sybil with deep indignation, perceived the eye of Fitz Hugh fixed admiringly upon the figure of a girl standing at the door, the less beautiful, but yet most attractive sister of the wretched Norah—he also with dread discovered that the girl was not alone; the tall athletic form of the young Irishman appeared by her side, and that sight prompted the utterance of her last words.

"What do you mean?" Fitz Hugh enquired, but Sybil was silent, shrinking from explanations which must entail the discussion of so dreadful a subject, and she hoped she had dissuaded him from his purpose, for he suffered her to turn, and they pursued their way in a contrary direction.

"Well Sybil," he resumed after a pause "you know I never was balked in any fancy I had once taken into my head—go home if you please—I *must* pay that cottage a visit—good bye!"

"Hardress! *you dare not.*" Sybil cried, fixing a meaning glance upon him. In no way disconcerted, he replied with a laugh of ridicule,

"Oh I can do any thing when I am *dared* to it."

Sybil released her hold, a horrid suggestion for one moment checked her breath. She thought upon the Irish youth—his threatening words of vengeance. If Fitz Hugh intruded his hateful presence beneath that roof, what would follow? She marked that the man had already recognized them, she had perceived him suddenly disappear within the cottage and then the face of *another* glared out upon them, but Hardress, she knew had remarked nothing but the girl.

It was late—the light was fast waning—should she let him go? Was it for her to frustrate the vengeance of heaven? her evil spirit seemed to whisper to her heart, and at this inward suggestion a momentary gleam of dreadful joy shot through her soul. "Liberty—from my hateful bonds!" but horror of this wicked thought, immediately succeeded. She shuddered at the bare idea of hurrying a soul loaded with so much unrepented sin, to everlasting destruction, and what dreadful guilt would not the act entail upon her own soul!

With agitated earnestness, which caused a momentary pleasure, in the heart of Fitz Hugh, her apparent anxiety for his safety, she hurriedly acquainted him with the danger he must meet, by intruding so rashly on the relations of his unfortunate victim—repeated the threat of vengeance, she had heard from the lips of him, who thirsted to wreak it upon him.

Hardress thanked her for the warning, and though he professed careless contempt for the menacing danger, he seemed tacitly to yield to her persuasions, and Sybil returned home to pour into the ear of her Father O'Brian, the confession of the terrible thoughts, which had for a moment flashed upon her soul.

The following night Fitz Hugh entered her presence—blood was on his clothes—a wound upon his head. "Thank you Sybil!" he exclaimed "for putting me on my guard; you may have the satisfaction, of feeling that you have saved your husband's precious life," and to her horrified ears, Hardress related, that he had been to the cottage, but with a companion—was attacked by two young fellows, one of whom had escaped, the other has been taken into custody, either to be hanged or transported for life, for the assault with intent to murder.

The last sentence was passed upon the lover—the brother escaped beyond the seas, and was



for some time unheard of by his friends—the father and daughter also left the neighborhood—and thus the wickedness of one man cast its withering blight on a house once the abode of humble peace and virtue.

### CHAPTER XXXVIII.

Oh! let the soul its slumber break—  
Arouse its senses, and awake  
To see how soon—Life—glides away,  
And the stern footsteps of decay  
Come stealing on

Our birth is but a starting place—  
Life is the running of the race,  
And death the goal.

There all our steps at last are brought—  
That path alone, of all unsought,  
Is found of all.—ANON.

ON the remainder of the period spent by this singular party at the old Irish Castle, we must not dwell further than it is necessary for the development of the narrative.

Three years had dragged their weary length, Lord Castlerosse had long begun to pay the penalty, seldom eluded by him "who slings his life away," and now disease commenced its rapid inroads upon his constitution, so that at sixty he was sinking beneath the premature infirmities of extreme old age.

Sybil, once aroused for her self-absorbing misery, was assiduous in ministering all the attention and solace it was in her power to bestow on the invalid. The old man was grateful to the broken-spirited creature, who so devotedly strove to alleviate his sufferings: the grief and shame which ever bowed her head, and banished all life and light from her soul, filled his heart with the profoundest compassion.

The ever-merciful Providence, who maketh all things to work together for good, had ordained that through the means of one of his sinful creatures, another should be raised from darkness into life. The accumulated sloth of thirty years had encrusted the soul of a man who, before that period, was naturally amiable in disposition, though his heart was tarnished and spoilt by a life of dissipation and libertinism. The good in his nature had since lain dormant, whilst every passion was extinguished with the departure of youth.

However, his softer qualities once again brought into play, it was a comparatively easy task to influence his mind on the subject of that world, on the confines of which he now stood. For Sybil's sake he first suffered the presence of the Priest, till at length, by his mild and judicious behavior, Father O'Brian unconsciously drew his attention to religious matters; and thus strangely were the spiritual interests of two beings brought under the dominion of a Roman Catholic Priest, who, having no aim but the eternal salvation of souls, at last saw them depart from him—the one from his life, the other with scarce a hope of meeting her again in this world—content with having made known to them the *one* sure way—the truth and the light, though no spirit of pride was gratified by his having won a new convert to his Church.

The strong prejudice entertained by the old

Lord against the very name of Popery, was a certain guarantee as to his safety on that point—and Sybil, though hurried by the first enthusiasm of despair to the last step between the two persuasions, was still restrained by thoughts and feeling which prevented aught from rooting out from her soul the religion of her parents—her children—her Albert—of him whose saint-like eloquence in dwelling on the theme, had so often charmed and elevated her heart. Alas! alas!—what a tie!—what a spell was that which bound her still to him she lost—which no power—no influence could rend asunder.

The gloomy calm of Sybil's existence might perhaps, in a measure, have imparted some of its quieting power to her breast—alone with the old man, the pious Priest, and her little child, it was, comparatively speaking, well with her—but the heavy galling yoke of Fitz Hugh's dominion over her soul and body, weighed like a mill-stone around her neck.

Neglect she would have hailed as a blessing—a relief—oh, how great! But such was not the will of her husband—no, he knew better how to shape the punishment for his present victim. Neglect had been for the wretched, loving Norah, to whom it proved both misery and death; but for her, whose galling demonstrations of loathing dislike towards himself—whose ruined looks and broken spirit gradually quenched the fervor of his passion—he found more effectual means of torment. A capricious exigence of her time and society—and when in his presence, either taunting ridicule—tyranny—or (more torturing still) a show of fondness! Wretched woman! how repellant to her soul were his caresses!—with what shuddering horror did she endure them!

Once the mood prompted him to take her picture—and then he mocked her with the continual sight of that grief-stricken—blighted wreck, placed in contrast with the Hebe, Thalia-like portrait of her lovely, joyous youth—a contrast indeed!

"Oh, had her mother seen her then,  
She'd not have known her child."

Harshness and violence on the part of Har-ress, she almost seemed to court—at least so it appeared to those unconscious of the height to which her ideas of self-mortification had arrived; and, indeed, what else could have given her courage. One day, soon after her confession to the Priest respecting the evil thoughts that had suggested themselves concerning her husband that evening, before the cottage of the Mahonys'—to dare the deed she then committed—a deed certain to bring down the fiercest indignation upon her head.

From her very bosom Sybil drew forth the precious picture which there had lain concealed for weeks—upon which, with wild infatuation she had gazed in secret—wept over, with

"Tears which comfort not, but burn, and seem  
To bear the heart's blood in their passion stream."

adjoined with words of passionate despair, "wing'd with agony," even till fevered imagination conjured up a living smile of pitying love—illuminating the "grave sweetness" of the eyes—playing on the stillness of the pictured lips.

And now to draw it forth, and with the stern determination of a *devotee*, yield it into the hands of Fitz Hugh! Expiation, indeed commensurate, if agony can atone for guilt!

Yes, this act in itself was agony intense—but what was it—what was even the humiliation of bodily pain compared with that which was to follow! In the first impulse of his ungovernable rage, at beholding the object presented to him, Fitz Hugh struck the victim, who stood pale as ashes before him, but with desperate calmness confessing her offence. "No cry was uttered when the heavy blow of passion fell upon the form once accustomed only to the gentle touch of caressing affection—but truly a shriek of agonized despair rent the air when she beheld Fitz Hugh, with fiendish delight, which seemed even to overpower his towering anger, efface before her very eyes, every trace of that sweet image, and demolish beneath his feet even the frame which had enclosed it!

But all that Fitz Hugh made her suffer was in a great degree softened when under the observation of Lord Castlerosse, and feeling that she would deem his ill-treatment as part of her merited mortifications, Hardress relied on her not making any complaint. He had not given up the hope that his uncle's inheritance would yet be allotted to him, if it were but for the sake of the attachment the Earl had conceived for his wife; and when, a few months before the death of Lord Castlerosse, he petitioned for a renewal of that supply which would enable him to occupy the seat in Parliament—which, on his elopement, he had resigned, but becoming vacant at this period, was again offered to him, the Earl had acceded to his request—the chief motive in so doing, being in reality the hope of release in a great degree, which Hardress's political career would offer to the unhappy Sybil, from the society of her husband; for the old man, unconscious that his own life was drawing so near unto a close, formed the resolution of insisting that during the London campaign, Mrs. Fitz Hugh and her mournful, noiseless child, should be left the inmates of his Castle.

Fitz Hugh made no objection. He was duly elected. Parliament opened, and the already popular orator departed, to electrify, by his overwhelming eloquence, the wondering listeners.

And where was *he*—the pure—the high-minded,

"To pour his Abdiel warnings on the train,"

to plead for all—great, good, and beautiful—

"Like a lost Pleiad, seen no more below!"

swept from the political horizon, in which for a season he had shone with such chaste and radiant brightness, obscured by the malignant influence of the Wicked One, who now, like a comet, shot forth once more in all its blazing light!

But ere Fitz Hugh had left the Castle many weeks, a crisis arrived to give a new and important coloring to the existence of the unhappy Sybil. Lord Castlerosse was seized with an alarming attack, and the medical man declared that he had not many days to live.

It was proposed to his Lordship that his nephew should be recalled—but this he desired might not be done. "Neither the one nor the other could possibly be benefitted or gratified by a last interview. The Earl retained his senses and the full exercise of speech—and all his remaining interest and anxiety seemed absorbed in the welfare of the being, who, after his death, had no prospect but to be utterly cast on an existence of hopeless wretchedness . . . delivered up to the sole mercy of her husband.

The old man called her one evening to his side, and bade her tell him if there was aught in his power to perform, which could in any way administer to her future comfort or happiness; his inheritance, by an irrevocable decree, had passed away from his nephew . . . but if by any means he could influence her future prospects, she was to name her wishes on the subject.

"I am truly grateful, Lord Castlerosse, for the fatherly kindness with which you have . . . for the sake, doubtless, of her father . . . treated a wretch . . . guilty, miserable, as myself. There is nothing in this world to which I can now aspire, but a quiet resting place, where my broken heart may in penitence seek for pardon. I should not shrink, I know from bearing the just punishment of my sin; but oh, Lord Castlerosse, *he* will shut from my sight the hope of heaven. Joyfully would I yield him the income which the too generous compassion of my injured lost ones have provided for my comfort, and with the smallest pittance seek the humblest home, where, with his poor, delicate child, I might hide my head, if by so doing, or aught else, some restraint could be placed upon his power over my actions."

Lord Castlerosse lingered some days after this conference, and lost no time during that period in forwarding the wishes thus expressed. On his will being opened, a codicil was found, in which a considerable sum was left to his nephew, Hardress Fitz Hugh, under the strict condition that Sybil, his wife, according to her desire, should be allowed a separate establishment, with his child. After some demur, this stipulation was in part agreed to by him whom it concerned . . . that is to say, Fitz Hugh agreed to a separate establishment, but was firm in declining a legal separation; he would ever claim the right of a husband to visit his wife, to watch over her safety and conduct.

A month after the death of Lord Castlerosse, the mother and child had received the blessing of the Priest, and departed.

## CHAPTER XXXIX.

They mourn, but smile at length; and smiling mourn,

The tree will wither long before it fall;

The hull drives on, though mast and sail be torn;

The roof-tree sinks, but moulders on the wall

In mossy hoariness; the ruin'd wall

Stands when its wind-worn battlements are gone:

The bars survive the captive they entral;

The day draws through, though storms keep out the sun;

And thus the heart will break, yet brokenly live on.

BYRON.

"How very kind of dear Papa to bring us to



this delightful place!" exclaimed a musical, child-like voice. "How gay and happy it makes me feel. Really, Mademoiselle, this charming breeze feels as if it would give me wings to fly along to the very end of this long, straight walk, if there were not so many people to remark one." And the young Sybil Lennard erected her head, and sobered her pace—her unusual growth of eleven years, and her womanly dignity, seeming effectually to check any such volatile manifestations, as her words expressed.

"Yes, it was very kind," answered the gentle voice of her sister, who turned her sweet eyes with quiet, smiling enjoyment upon the calm, heaving ocean; which lay glittering before her like a flood of light, as on one of Brighton's brightest, freshest Autumn mornings, I, with my two lovely young pupils, walked on the gay Esplanade—drinking in, oh with what different feelings! the "free and living breath of the sea-born gale."

"Yes—yes very kind," repeated Mary. "I do so hope that darling Papa will enjoy it as we do, and that it will bring the roses to his pale cheek—brightness to his sweet smile. But dear Mademoiselle, where are your roses, and your smiles? you look so pale and sad!" and my elder pupil gazed with affectionate anxiety into my face.

"I can tell why Mam'selle looks sad," she murmured, "I know she did not wish to come to Brighton, and I know why, too—I heard Nurse telling—"

But I interrupted the little girl, turning the subject with as much cheerfulness as I could assume, and the next moment all our attention and interest were diverted by the distant sight of some equestrians, galloping along the cliff towards us.

"Oh yes!" the girls cried, as they approached, "here they are! Papa—Willie Mordaunt, and dear Bertie. How rosy and beautiful my brother looks; and how well he manages that pretty, frisky pony!" and they sprang to the side of the railings to greet the new comers, who reigned in their steeds as they reached us.

"Such a gallop on the Downs!" exclaimed Bertie, whilst one patted his pony's head, the other the steed of her father, who smiled an acquiescent reply, as his eyes rested on that picture of boyish—animated beauty, which his son's face afforded; his chestnut hair lightly lifted by the breeze from his cheeks, bright with the bloom of health and joyous glee.

For a moment, a glow, almost as bright, irradiated his own countenance, but ah! too soon had it faded, like the sunset upon the waters, and a pale—fragile—sadly smiling man, (such smiles how far more sad than tears!) stood before us, listening to the happy voices of his children—gazing upon their lovely faces.

Bertie till now had had no other instruction but from myself and his father. Yes, the highly gifted statesman, rejecting gratefully, but firmly, the urgent entreaties, and almost indignant remonstrances of the highest and greatest of the state, for him to come forth and shine once more amongst them, had no interest, no energy, but in tenderly watching the budding intellect and opening character of his little son.

At thirteen the boy was to go to Eton, by the particular request of his grandfather; thus overruling the half-formed purpose of a private education. For three years before that period a tutor was to be engaged.

It was not, however, any circumstance regarding this treasured child, which brought us from our retirement. The young daughters were equally in their father's thoughts, but his solicitude for them was of a sadder and peculiar character.

Mr. Lennard's affection for his boy, seemed to bring with it naught but pleasure, but there ever mingled with his feelings towards the girls, an uneasy—almost distressed sensitiveness, especially as regarded Sybil, whose particular disposition, justified such anxious tenacity.

For Mary the existence of any doubt or fear was scarcely possible, unless it might be the idea that such perfect loveliness, and purity of heart, were not fitted for continuance in this world of sin and pollution.

With the education of the sisters, Mr. Lennard interfered not at all. Their little faults and imperfections, if they were ever brought before his notice, he reproved only—and how affectingly! by silent looks of sadness and submission; as if one, who having seen an angel fall, could ne'er again experience aught but sorrowful pity, for failings and imperfections in any human creature.

A few masters were engaged for the little Lennards; and a celebrated instructress in dancing attended at our house. Much charmed was she with the natural grace, and patrician ease of the movements of her three pupils, in their several characters.

The two young Mordaunts, fine boys of fourteen and twelve, were sometimes admitted to make up a set, and these lessons proved at first, one of the chief delights of the Brighton visit. The father would come sometimes to watch their active, flying forms, and listen to the flattering encomiums of Madame——on his daughter's excellence, with a sad, sweet smile of pleasure.

## CHAPTER XL.

..... This altered face,  
Bearing its deadly sorrow characterized,  
Came to him like a Ghost, which in the grave  
Could find no rest. SOUTHEY'S RODERICK.

WE remained at Brighton till after Christmas, and *en route* to Llewellyn, stopped in London, where for one month we took possession of Lord ——'s Villa in the Regent's Park. Mr. Lennard having business to transact, which rendered the short stay in the metropolis necessary, gratefully accepted the offer, made to him by his noble friend, of this residence during his temporary sojourn.

The fatal house in Park Lane, had never been entered by its owner, since he quitted it, at that wretched period, for Worthing, and it was now sold. London indeed, as may be imagined, had become altogether distasteful to

Mr. Lennard, both on account of the associations attached to it, and the impossibility while there, of preserving total seclusion from acquaintances, who with officious kindness would strive to restore him to his former sphere. The town however had not began to fill—the situation of our abode was retired—and Mr. Lennard showed himself so little, that he was able to remain comparatively unmolested.

My readers will naturally suppose that on hearing of the death of Lord Castlerosse, the friends of the unfortunate being, whose fate they knew must in some degree be affected by that event, did not neglect to gain some information on the subject. A legacy left by the Earl to Mr. Devereux in the shape of a mourning ring, formed a channel for inquiries. All knowledge however to be acquired was, that the disposal of the property of the deceased, put an end to the possibility of the Castle being any longer a residence for the nephew and his wife; indeed that Mrs. Fitz Hugh and her child had already quitted it, but their subsequent place of destination was not known. Fitz Hugh was again in Parliament, and his stay in London during the preceding session was also ascertained, but from what Mr. Devereux could glean, Sybil had not been with her husband.

Some rumor of a separation between the parties, a short time afterwards, reached the father's ears, and on that supposition, he had even gone so far as to write to Fitz Hugh, requesting information on the subject of his child.

In reply, Mr. Devereux received a short but civilly worded answer, to the effect that his daughter was still under her husband's protection; no further communication being added, respecting Mrs. Fitz Hugh's present or future plans, or residence. We were therefore led to suppose that during the public career of Fitz Hugh, his wife had retired to the seclusion befitting her circumstances; and with this idea, we had been forced to remain content. As to whether her lot were misery or the reverse, we were still to remain in ignorance.

From that time no trace of her could be discovered. A dark shroud seemed enveloping her from our sight for ever. The last frail links of doubt, and fear, and anxiety, which had bound us still in some manner to the lost one, appeared even to melt away, as time, as it were, carried her more irrecoverably from our view.

And again three years passed, during which time I strove to do my duty by those dear children dependent on my care and affection. Three years, uninterrupted save by the sorrowful pinings, and feverish longings, for one whose spirit ever seemed hovering round me, time seeming gradually to restore it more and more to my heart and affections, as the being whom I had loved, with an attachment never again to be equalled towards any human creature.

Judge then readers of my feelings, when at the close of that period, I found myself seated with a letter in my hand, whose direction being in a strange hand I had carelessly opened, but found filled with characters, which burst upon

my sight as those I had helped to form, of a hand I had often guided along the paper—that dear hand which had so meekly, cheerfully yielded to my guidance, pausing but to press mine so affectionately within its own. Oh that the time should have ever come, when it would thus prove the instrument to breathe forth such lamentations, as those set forth in the following lines!

## CHAPTER XLI.

"Line after line my gushing eyes o'erflow,  
Led through a sad variety of woe."  
POPE'S *ÆLUSIA* TO ABELARD.

Fair children rise  
Round the glad board  
On one alone  
Their freshness may not fall—the stricken deer  
Dying of thirst with all the waters near."  
MRS. HENANS' *RECORDS OF WOMAN*.

"FELICIE,

"In remembrance of my years of childish and youthful innocence... those years of which you were the guardian, and the friend... the almost mother! spurn not... cast not away in hatred and horror, when you see whose hand-writing is before your eyes... pages in which a miserable sinner would fain raise a feeble cry for mercy and compassion. Only read, and if your soul still turns revoltingly against the guilty being, whose remorse and anguish cannot you may truly say, wash away the shame and dishonor brought on all those belonging to her, then again I will resign myself to the dark living tomb in which I have latterly existed. *'Like unto those that lie in the grave, who are out of remembrance, and are cut away from thy hand,'* the indignation of the Lord lying hard upon me. Abhorred—put far away from friends and acquaintances still so fast in prison that I cannot escape... so fast not only in the prison of this life's earthly feelings and desires, but bound in heart as well as in being, to a world which must be to me *'a place of darkness and of the deep.'*"

"Yes, Felicie, it is now nearly four years since I left Ireland, with, as I fancied, no hope or desire but to retire to some obscure spot of my native country, and there spend my remaining days in strict penance, and resignation, to the forlorn and rayless lot my guilt had but too well merited.

"I arrived in England, and with the light, air, and liberty, which, comparatively speaking, I then regained, my heart once more beat madly, with longing, yearning thoughts which I had deemed deadened and laid low forever. But it is not my purpose to trouble you with details concerning myself, unconnected with the subject which now moves me to address you. Suffice it that I was in London, or rather in its suburbs when you were there; still under *his surveillance*, but not under his roof; the kindness of Lord Castlerosse having gained me that privilege. I found there all the seclusion I could crave, and from the time I saw in the public prints that you were at Brighton, a mad infatu-



ation possessed me to linger, where at least there was most chance of tidings, perhaps of beholding those for whom my whole soul was gasping, as the 'hart pant for the water brook.'

"You came—I knew that you were near, but I was watched—oh God! how jealously watched! As if a wretched woman looking on her lost children, would do *him* wrong! But I *did* see them. Yes! I discovered the situation of their abode, and often followed in a coach, the well known carriage which contained my treasures—sometimes at a distance tracked their footsteps in the Park... strained my eyes after their beautiful forms, as they walked by your side... while I, wretched creature! dared not approach. I feared your recognition... I feared the cold, loathing glance of the friend of my early days... I feared that the sight of one so vile, intruding so near unto innocence and purity, would be the signal for guarding against its repetition... for carrying my children far... far away from the possibility of further exposure to such pollution.

"But I had not seen *him*. Once—once I had felt his presence—but my brain had reeled,—my breath was gone—my sight waxed dim—yes, I felt that he had been near me, but that was all! Oh! miserable being that I now became! what had been my former sufferings, compared to those I now endured! In the several states through which my soul had passed during its dark sepulchral existence of the last few years; in the pulseless torpor of despair—the illusive dreams, which had at times mocked my waking senses—in the blind zeal of self-mortification of mind and body, there had been some soothing delusion; but now I was, as it were, restored to the world, to the actual realization of misery, which despair could not blunt—dreams could not beguile of the agony thereof.

"Could even the tortures of Tantalus have exceeded those, endured by a mother—a wife, knowing that her children—her husband were so near—yet so far—so far from her reach! Yes, Felicie, start not—*my husband*!—the husband of my affections! None ever possessed my heart—I swear by the heavens above!—save in that brief period of mad delirium, when I drank in poison as water—drained a bewitching hell cup. But to my story.

"I grew desperate—bold. I sallied forth and lingered near your abode at dusk. I stood behind a tree opposite to the window, and strained my eyes to catch a nearer perception of the forms I could indistinctly trace moving within. I think the tantalizing nature of my situation deprived me at the moment of all self-control or fear of consequences, for soon I found myself approaching recklessly quite close to the casement. Oh! my friend, that glance! It could have been but momentary, for the eyes of my Sybil, fixed themselves upon her mother, with that wild, fierce gaze, which seemed to ask, what right had she to be there—*she*, their shame and dishonor! This gaze recalled me to my senses—froze my blood with terror, and sent me shrinking and shivering away, like a forlorn, guilty outcast as I am.

"But oh! my moment's glance what had it not revealed! The fire gleam fell upon the

bowed heads of my Bertie—my Mary! as side by side they sat lovingly, as when little children I have often watched them—their merry play hushed—talking sweetly together at that same dusky hour. It was, however, but a passing glimpse I caught of them, for—oh! God! I saw *Albert* face to face—so near, yet so distant. Yes, I felt how distant. It was the same Albert, the outline of the features which were turned towards me plainly revealed—the same; yet so changed—so hallowed—so glorified did he appear to my eyes, that entranced I gazed, as upon a spirit. His eyes were fixed upon his boy, and a smile suddenly played upon his lips. Oh! how could words embody the feelings of that instant? It was then I caught my daughter's gaze. I heard a step approaching—I was disenchanted—I fled like a guilty spirit, and fled again to darkness and despair.

"After this I was *not* mad—no, a merciful God has preserved me from that dreadful chastisement; but for some time, I remained in a state of mind, which might certainly have justified the strict oversight of the man, who has gained dominion over my destiny. Since then, however, he has wearied of the task—no wonder he should weary of such a withered, lifeless wreck, as I am become! And for the last year I have been at liberty—buried in a secluded country place—alone with the poor being, whom our sin brought into the world, to suffer, as it were, for her parent's guilt; for truly, her little life has been one of uninterrupted pain.

"But why speak of her—why insult you by seeming to expect interest in, or pity for, aught connected with my shame and ignominy? I have already intruded my wretched self upon your notice—wandered from the character, under which I had purposed to address you, as a humble petitioner—not as a troublesome complainant of woes, which you will say I have merited—aye, justly merited Felicie! But shall man be more just than his Creator—shall he refuse to hear the cry of a miserable creature, whom the great God vouchsafes to look down upon from his throne on high, refuse to send a whisper of comfort to the grovelling worm, who, lying in the depths of earthly despair, cannot so much as lift up her eyes, and stretch out her arms to Heaven for help? Then hear me, Felicie, when I cry to you, 'My children! My children!' for it is touching them I would crave your mercy and compassion. I have, sometimes now, periods of calmness and dispassionate reflection, in which I think upon my children, and feel that *they* are still my own. No law of man can divorce a mother from her offspring. I never ask to look again on Albert's face in this life. Felicie—Felicie, that I should ever write these words to *you*! But he can be mine no more in this world, and my aim now is, to become more fit to meet him in that land where none can 'marry, or be given in marriage.'

"But Felicie, I implore you—help to quench the feverish thirst of earthly feeling, which dries my very heart, and chokes the prayer that would flow from it to Him, who can alone lead me to that cleansing fountain. It is in your power. Again I repeat the cry, 'My children—my children!' All I ask is, that you, who pos-

ness such entire control over them, should suffer the veil which hides them from their mother, to be in some degree withdrawn, by enlightening her from time to time by letter, concerning their proceedings—their health—their dispositions, looks, tastes, and habits; and more, in mercy spurn me not, if, some day I start up like a trembling ghost before your path. Suffer me to see them—to look upon them, or if it happens, to speak to them, without bidding me avault—without tearing them from my sight. They shall not know me, I will be to them as a stranger—only let me hear their voices—look into their faces—see their smile turned upon me. Yes, fear not, it shall be but as a stranger—I would not brave the frowns—the looks of shrinking hatred or horror, which, to know me as that guilty outcast, must assuredly, bring down upon me. Oh! let me but see my boy—in him, I may still behold the father. He may be soon separated from the rest, therefore the step will be more easily accomplished.

"I can write no farther—only once more I conjure you, in the name of a God of mercy, compassion, and long suffering—in the name of that Son who closed not his ear against the desolate, oppressed, sinful—vile as they might be—in remembrance of my days of innocence and purity—in consideration of a mother's agony, give me, I beseech you, Felicie, hope—give me light and life by granting my supplication."

## CHAPTER XLII.

Fair was that girl—and meek,  
With a pale transparent cheek,  
And a deep fringed violet eye  
Seeking in sweet shade to lie;  
Or, if raised to glance above,  
Dim with its own dews of love;  
And a pure Madonna brow—  
And a silvery voice, and low,  
Like the echo of a lute. MRS. HEMANS.

BERTIE was now thirteen. The midsummer succeeding his birthday we were busy in preparations for his departure for Eton. Pale cheeks, tearful eyes, and sinking hearts, were the harbingers of this event; and well might they be so—for with the boy—the sunbeam of our path—the light of our home would depart.

"Why should he go?" Sybil passionately exclaimed. "Papa will not be able to exist without him; we can never supply his place; Papa lives upon Bertie's smiles and joyous company. And Mr. St. John, too, he will miss him so much; we shall be such a miserable dismal party."

"We must try not to be so, dear Sybil," I replied; "for your Father's sake, we must exert ourselves to be cheerful, and contribute our portion of light to make up for our lost sun."

"And then his return!" said Mary, her eyes glistening with dewy drops. "I cannot imagine any joy so great."

A sigh was heard—it was from Mr. St. John, who sat at a table writing. Sybil turned quickly round, and asked him, why he sighed. Smiling at the abrupt, peremptory interrogatory, he replied,

"Miss Sybil seems ever to imagine, that no one has any right to sigh or complain, save herself—but if I must give her the reason for my presuming to do so, I will confess that mine was a sigh of envy—I wished I had a sister to speak of my return, as one of Bertie's sisters expressed herself just now."

"Oh, it was Mary who spoke of his return; I can only think and talk of his departure," exclaimed Sybil.

"But we shall miss you, too, very much, Mr. St. John," said Mary! "For your own sake, and for Papa's. You would have been a companion for him during Bertie's absence—to say nothing of our Latin lessons."

"Oh, Miss Lennard," Mr. St. John answered very gravely, "you know enough Latin; I assure you I should not have continued those lessons even had I remained."

"Why not?" she artlessly inquired, looking up towards a countenance beaming with intellect.

"Because more of such learning would spoil you, Miss Lennard. I would not wish you to know more of any thing than you already do—"

"And I, Mr. St. John?" asked Sybil.

"Oh, you are a *Sibyl*," he answered, with a smile, "and must necessarily know everything you desire; your name at once—"

"Oh, don't speak of my name!" she exclaimed, impatiently interrupting him, her cheeks crimsoning—"I hate it!"

I looked at her gravely; she stopped abruptly, and with a confused air.

Mr. St. John, who, for the last three years, had taken upon himself the charge of preparing Bertie for Eton, was a younger son of a branch of a family of distinction; and his elder brother had been the college friend of Mr. Lennard. To defray the expenses of his Oxford education, without encroaching upon his widowed mother's slender income, this talented young man resolved to enter upon some situation similar to the one he now held.

His first aim had been to accompany some youthful nobleman abroad, but accidentally meeting Mr. Lennard and his little son, Mr. St. John's interest and admiration were so high excited, that he immediately offered to undertake the office of tutor to the boy; Mr. Lennard at that moment being anxiously in search of a person to fill the situation. This was a fortunate circumstance in more than one point of view—for not only did Mr. St. John prove a most superior instructor to Bertie, but soon entitled himself to become the friend and companion of Mr. Lennard.

I could easily understand the nature of the sentiments expressed by Mr. St. John in his conversation with Mary. To have seen her as she was then, at fifteen, would perhaps have been the best interpretation of the subject, to a refined and imaginative mind.

Mr. St. John was much interested in both the girls, and I often found his assistance very useful in the management of the difficult temper of my younger pupil; who often required a more masculine power of firmness, than my too fond and broken spirit was able to call into action. And when her father could but chide by sorrowful looks or faltering words, Mr. St. John, by



convincing arguments, could resist—even “rebuke the foul spirit” by the astonished expression of his dark eyes, which at times would almost match her own in fire; though no one could have imagined that possible, who had only seen them when bent over the book, from which the gentle Mary was reading her Latin lesson by his side.

But with Bertie’s departure, we were also to lose this ally. Mr. St. John had determined upon taking Orders, and was to leave Llewellyn for Oxford at the same time as his pupil departed for Eton. I had not as yet broken to the girls my purpose of going away for a short time, but so I had arranged with Mr. Lennard; and I at length informed them of my intention, evading the numerous inquiries which the announcement called forth, by the convenient answer of—“*Business*”

Mary was confidently satisfied, though grieved; but Sybil fretted and fumed, as usual, to know what business I could possibly have, to take me away from them, at a period when my company was most necessary. She was, however, somewhat appeased by the intelligence, that Mr. Devereux—with whom I had been in correspondence on the secret reason of my pilgrimage—was to take my place at Llewellyn during my temporary absence; and after being satisfied on this point—grief, at the idea of losing her brother, swallowed up all her thoughts.

### CHAPTER XLIII.

If I should meet thee  
After long years,  
How should I greet thee?  
With silence and tears!—BYRON.

It was on a balmy July evening that the coach set me down at the pretty Inn on the road side, near—, in Surrey, where I inquired for Rose Cottage, the residence of Mrs. Hughes. I was directed to its locality, and a chaise or a guide offered to convey me thither. It was three miles distant by the road, but there was a short cut across the fields, I was told... so I determined to walk.

As I was taking some refreshment in the Inn-parlor, I asked a few questions concerning the lady whom I was about to visit. As my demands had more the appearance of those of a stranger than a friend, the attendant soon threw off the little caution which had at first met my endeavors to draw her forth upon the subject... and by the subsequent readiness of the woman to give information, a striking evidence was afforded, of the great mistake very often committed by the unfortunate or the fallen... who, desirous of escaping observation, fly from great cities, and the resorts of former friends and acquaintances, to the quiet haunts of the few, and of the stranger. In the city they need fear no molestation of any kind. The wretched have but to abstain for a while from trusting themselves imprudently in the broad sunshine—in the open paths of the world—in order to avoid exposure, to scorn—insult, or contemptuous pity, according to their offence. For the rest, they may soon venture

forth unseen—or if seen, not even known, or else “passed by on the other side.” In short, they may sink into oblivion and obscurity... “may live forgotten, and die forlorn,” though crowds may be ever thronging past the home of the solitary, and the buzz of myriad voices—perhaps those of lovers and friends, mingling loudest in the throng—may reach his dying-bed!

But let a stranger come to some comparatively secluded place—his former history but partially known—with the least particle of mystery or interest attached to his person, or previous life, and in vain can he seek to hide himself from the whispers and comments of the idle—the curious! Thus it had certainly been with the recluse of Rose Cottage, for I was by degrees informed of every minute particular relating to her.

“A female servant,” said my informant, “was sent to see the Cottage, and hired it for the lady, who stopped at the Inn on the way, with a child, a sickly little creature, whom it made one’s heart ache to behold. The woman who takes care of her, used sometimes to bring the poor child here on a donkey, when she came for butter and eggs and such like things, but lately she has been too bad for that.”

“And the lady?” I asked, in as steady a tone as I could assume, “is her health good? Is she much seen? How does she pass her time?”

“Why, poor body! when she first came, she was thought to be mad, and that was why she looked so strange, and was so seldom seen abroad with the child, but she was soon discovered to be quite sane, only melancholy and unfortunate. And then the story came out, for a gentleman visited her who was known by some one, and she proved to be a lady of quality who had behaved ill. I forget her right name, but they say it is not really Hughes.”

“And has she made no acquaintances?” I inquired; “has no living soul been near her, of her own class?”

“Oh no! no one, except the gentleman to whom I believe she is married now—he has come down once or twice. She has had no other visitors from afar that we know of, and the few gentlefolk about here, when they found out what she was, of course would not go near her. They used to notice the little girl, when she first came, if they met her in her walks or rides, and the Clergyman’s children were let to play with her; but when all was known, the poor little creature was looked as shy upon, as the mother herself.”

“And the Clergyman, does he not offer any spiritual consolation to the lady?” was my next question.

“Mr. Bennett preaches—and in a most edifying manner too—every Sunday morning and afternoon,” replied the Landlady; “but Mrs. Hughes seldom if ever goes to Church.”

“But does not the Minister visit her personally?”

“Oh no, Madam, he could not visit a lady when his wife is not able to do so. If she was dangerously ill, I am sure Mr. Bennett would

do his duty, but the doctor who attends the child says the lady has no particular bodily ailment."

But half an hour's walk brought me to my appointed destination. On turning down a lane, I found myself without the garden palisade which enclosed Rose Cottage. My guide, seeing me pause, stepped forward, opened the little gate, and stood waiting for me to pass on.

I would have given worlds for some little delay. My heart sank and sickened, but I summoned courage and went on. The man disappeared down a path leading to the back of the house, with his burden, and I approached the entrance door alone.

A verandah ran along the front of the cottage—with creeping plants, honeysuckles, roses and clematis in such profusion, that it was not till I stood quite close, that I perceived that there was any one underneath its shade; so still and silent were the two figures which then caught my sight. I was able for a moment to observe them, without myself being seen, for either my step had not attracted their attention, or it had been supposed to be that of the woman whom I saw sauntering in the garden.

On a couch placed beneath the verandah, a child of apparently six or seven years old, lay upon her back, pale and emaciated, strewn over with flowers, and so immoveable, that it was almost with a shudder that my eyes first rested upon her—it was so like unto death. But then I saw that her eyes were open, and lifted to the skies—and such eyes they were—so large, and full of bright though serious intelligence, apparently of a nature above her years.

But by her side, there sat the tall and equally motionless figure of a woman, and her eyes—dark and large, but leaden and unsparkling, were also fixed in deep abstraction. Her features were strongly marked with lines of care and suffering; the dark hair drawn tightly from her temples, was streaked here and there with grey. In short, for an instant, I could scarcely credit that I indeed saw before me, the same creature that had disappeared from my sight—it then seemed but as yesterday, in the height of youth and loveliness.

I had never imagined to myself that eight years—even allowing for the ravages ever made by sin and sorrow on the outward man—could have worked so great a change; but if I had felt tempted to doubt her identity, that doubt must have been speedily removed, when her eyes turning upon me, were riveted for an instant with a bewildered stare. And then, as I stretched out my hand, and my quivering lips murmured "Sybil!" she rose with a stifled cry, staggered as if she would have fallen, but catching at a chair again gazed wildly on me, then shrank back, and

"Bowed her head abased  
As one who if the grave

Had oped beneath her, would have thrown herself,  
Even like a lover, in the arms of Death."

"Sybil!" I again exclaimed, for my tongue would speak no more; and I grasped convulsively the cold hand with which she held the support

She raised her head and gasped forth:—

"Felicie—oh, kind, oh, merciful Felicie—have you come to the wretched—the outcast!"

"Yes, Sybil;" I faltered, my own limbs beginning to fail me, "sit down—calm yourself—think only that your early friend is come to visit you—to cheer and comfort you."

I could say no more. I drew her to the bench, on which we sank. And there we sat side by side—holding each others' hands—looking on each other's faces, in speechless—unutterable emotion, fraught with no delight or softness, but all pain—burning pain and anguish. Deeper and deeper sank my spirit—more and more did my tongue refuse to speak its words of cheer and comfort. What consolation, I felt, was there for desolation so irremediable, as was imprinted on her altered face?

At length a slight movement near us broke the awful stillness. I instinctively raised and turned my eyes slowly round, then fastened them upon the little being who lay near, a quiet observer of this scene. Even at that awful moment, I was vividly struck by the touching spectacle which the child's countenance then afforded, as there she rested, her dark eyes fixed upon us. There was naught of fear, astonishment, or curiosity, in its expression—only earnest, mournful feeling.

"Poor little thing!" I murmured, involuntarily, as my tears now suffused my before tearless eyeballs. This sentence broke the spell which had hitherto bound us; for Sybil when she beheld what direction my gaze was seeking, started; the settled burning flush looking as if

"Shame, deep shame had once  
Burnt on her cheek  
Then lingered there for ever."

spread like fire over her whole face, neck, and brow; and again bowing low her head, she at the same time lifted up her hands and spread them before the child, as if she would have shielded some offensive object from my sight. But the sudden impulse over, her arms dropped, and once more the little creature's submissive, melancholy, observing gaze met my view—a gentle, grateful smile passing over her wan features, as she caught the pitying glance I gave her. She languidly lifted her small transparent hand towards me. I took it in mine; but there was something so inexpressibly affecting in her manner, that I burst into a fresh flood of tears.

"Come, Felicie, come away from an object, which can indeed be to you but painful and repulsive," said the hollow, agitated voice of the mother, as she rose and stood by my side.

"Oh no, Sybil," I murmured, "do not think me so cruel;" and I still retained the little hand.

"The lady is very kind, Mara,—is she not?" she then rejoined, as if she too were softened, and a slightly subdued tone mingled in her accents, though it still seemed but a sepulchral voice in which to address a child.

"Very kind!" was gently echoed from the Child's pale lips—"will she love me?"

"Yes, yes;" I sobbed.

"You are not used to love, Mara," the mother said, in a calmer, but more bitter voice.



"No—only pity," responded the little girl, softly.

"Not always that, Mara. Scorn, ignominy, are they not oftener your portion—the portion your mother has given you?"

And Sybil laughed—Oh, the ghost-like echo of that music of other days—so keen, so bitter!—how it froze my blood!

I saw by her wild, haggard looks that the excitement of this sudden meeting was beginning to overpower all self command over her feelings, and once more my thoughts were forced on her alone. We entered the cottage together, and then followed a conference which I will not attempt fully to describe. From it, however, I learnt little relating to herself. No; when on being sufficiently composed to give any connected account of my unexpected appearance, I informed my unhappy companion, that with the knowledge and approval of her father—nay, even of her former husband, I had come in person to answer her letter, and to inquire into her welfare, all the hard rocky nature of the grief-stricken being seemed to melt. It might have been a salutary relief to the sufferer herself, but it was dreadful to be the witness of the strong bursts of passionate emotion which agitated her frame—the oceans of tears which flowed from her eyes. Niobe weeping herself into a statue, was in that moment of terror instinctively suggested to my imagination. And when the storm had in some degree subsided, then, "My children, my children!" was again her cry; and of her children, I had to pour forth all that I could speak concerning them, whilst she listened with gasping—trembling avidity.

Hour after hour thus passed over our heads. "A balmy night with all its stars" had succeeded the still summer evening; and exhausted nature at length began to usurp its claims. I was recalled, by Sybil's fainting appearance, to the common place necessities of life—to my own need of refreshment and repose. Of the latter truly I stood much in need; my brain by this time was whirling from the effects of my long, fatiguing journey, and the agitation I had since undergone.

#### CHAPTER XLIV:

Thou that with pallid cheek,  
And eyes in sadness mock,

Before the all-healing son  
Didst bow thee to the earth.

Did he reject thee then,  
While the sharp scorn of men  
On thy once bright and stately head was cast?  
No; from the Saviour's mien,  
A solemn light serene,  
Bore to thy soul the peace of God at last.

MRS. HEMANS.

How confused and bewildered were my feelings, on finding myself alone in the chamber prepared for me! To think that I was again under the same roof with Sybil—the Sybil "of other days," yet so changed both in herself and her circumstances!—the idea was hard to realise. How strange was all around her!

A middle aged woman, of a sad and grave demeanor, waited civilly on me. I inquired of her, how long she had lived with Mrs. Fitz Hugh, and being told that she had entered her service on the continent, I ventured to speak more confidently on the subject of her mistress. There was a spiritless reserve about the woman, which seemed to prevent her from being communicative, but what little she said, was spoken with feeling.

"She was glad—very glad—her lady had found a friend to come and visit her at last. It was a mournful position," and she sighed as she uttered these last words, "to live a friendless stranger in a foreign land, but worse still to be thus in one's own country."

"Yes! for two long years," she informed me on my further questioning her, "the cottage had been their abode. It was a pleasant spot enough in the summer months, but to the lonely heart all places were the same."

She shuddered when I mentioned Ireland. "There truly they had suffered much of varied misery; here it had been a season of dreary calm," and nothing more dismal could I indeed image, than the trio I had seen under that roof.

How broken were the slumbers that visited me, may be conceived; and in the intervals of my restless sleep, sounds often reached my ears, breaking the stillness of the night—gentle moaning as of one in pain, mingled with the low murmuring of another deep and melancholy voice. It was Sybil tending her ailing child through her sleepless, uneasy hours—so the German servant told me the next morning.

"Mrs. Fitz Hugh almost always did so; it was seldom she could be prevailed upon to allow her to take that place."

"Is Mrs. Fitz Hugh very fond of the child?" I asked.

"Ah!" the woman answered, shaking her head, with a sigh, "it is I suppose a love—a very deep love in its way—*ein trubsinnige Liebe*—as she thus expressed herself in her own tongue.

I inquired from what complaint the child was a sufferer.

She had been weak and sickly from her birth, I was informed, but now a decided spine complaint was gradually reaching its climax. I remonstrated afterwards with the mother, on the injury these constant and exhausting vigils must effect upon her health.

"My health!" she replied; "that is a small sacrifice to make to the innocent sufferer for my sin. As long as her miserable life is continued, she shall at least receive the devotion and duty of a mother... but a feeble atonement for the weight of retribution and anguish that mother has brought upon her."

I cannot enter minutely into every particular of this sad visit. The first day was spent, by me, in gleaning records of the past, as well as the present condition of the unfortunate Sybil.

[Note by the Editor.—Having already placed before the reader, in the shape of narrative, that portion of the story, comprised in the confession of Mrs. Fitz Hugh—its relation in that form is unnecessary. The following extract, however contains too awful a warning to be omitted.]

"Yes, Felicie," she said, "*those books!*—that was the poison that destroyed me—poison so skillfully proportioned—so insidiously administered—backed by the conversation of a vitiated woman. Harmless it all appeared at first—and so ravishing in its enchanting mazes, that I saw not—felt not the bonds, with which I was loaded. Vice ceased to appear as vice—for in those scenes which depicted it—the more exalted and seductive became the eloquence and pathos of the style. I cannot tell the exact point at which the venom began to spread—but soon was I deep in the bewitching snares to which one so uninitiated in works of imagination, was peculiarly formed to be an easy victim! Oh, the soft, dreamy influence which lulled my weak mind into a state which was at the time, Elysium! How dull—how cold—how irksome—did daily cares and duties, before such light and pleasant burdens, appear to my polluted and enervated mind! Was it not then easy—the plague spot once forced upon my heart—for insidious friends, by art and subtle devices, to diffuse rapidly the infection—to render me—what I for a brief space became—all morbid passion—guilty flame!"

"Had I been made more familiar with the world—even with the beguiling wickedness of the world—I feel that I should have been able to see through the false colors in which it was then presented to me—but so strictly guarded, as I had ever been, from all knowledge of its vices—was it wonderful that when they suddenly appeared to me, in a guise so fresh and fascinating, I should press the delicious draught to my lips—pausing not to analyze, lest poison should be therein infused? The whole code of morality, in which I had been educated, appeared totally reversed—I became reckless, and soon plunged into that black gulph of perdition, from which I looked in vain for deliverance and salvation!"

I strove earnestly to arouse the unfortunate Sybil from the state of spiritual despondency into which her soul had sank. Of her religious history, she gave me an account. She told of the comfort which the good Priest, by his well meant zeal, had afforded, by awakening her from the despair in which she had been found. Though the uncontrollable enthusiasm of wretchedness, by which she had been carried away, had soon counteracted the benefit—by impelling her excited mind to an excess of mistaken ardor—I could perceive by the recital, how soon—when left to herself, with no human aid to buoy up her fainting spirit to the laborious task of a self-imposed austerity—she had again sank low upon the earth, smitten with her own impotency to act or move.

#### CHAPTER XLV.

"There are shades which will not vanish,  
There are thoughts thou canst not banish,

Thou art wrapt as with a shroud,  
Thou art gather'd in a cloud,  
And for ever shalt thou dwell  
In the spirit of this spell."—MANFRED.

As we sat beneath the verandah that Sabbath

Summer evening, so balmy and mild—fragrant flowers closing around us—the birds chanting their vesper song, the only sound which met our ear, I could not refrain from saying, as I pressed the hand of my silent companion,

"Be thankful, Sybil, for the soothing peace, this sweet spot affords you!"

"Peace!" she repeated in her deep tone of dejection. "There is no peace for the wicked, Felicie!—no peace for the wretch ever haunted by a remembrance grievous and intolerable—a fearful vision which I have often called on Death itself to hide from me—a retrospection that time obscures not—darkness conceals not—sunshine lightens not—a phantom that never vanishes, changing its form a hundred times a day. Upon whatever I look back—whatever circumstance I call to mind, far or near—no matter when... no matter where—there it ever is—the memory of my sin! And why should I forget it? why should I expect peace in this world? Nay, I know it is not so to be; for if even a momentary forgetfulness has steeped my senses a slight foretaste of such peace as I enjoyed this morning—if for a moment I am calm, I too surely and too soon, find myself restored to recollection; some thorn in the flesh is sent to recal me. Even now I feel," and she said this in a low mysterious tone, as she turned her eyes fearfully around, "I feel that my present happiness—yes, happiness I can almost call this moment—is soon to be disturbed."

With astounding truth was this ominous presentiment verified; and in what shape more horrible could the spectre of her forebodings have appeared before me than that in which it came? A tall figure stood suddenly before us in the declining light, and I felt the hand I held within mine, become cold as death. It was the dark spirit which had destroyed us all... it was Hardress Fitz Hugh whom I beheld, and I had no right now to bid him avault. I had no power to guard my unhappy Sybil from his noxious approach. She was his... his victim! bound to him forever by chains which none could break or put asunder.

It was manifest how truly she felt his irrevocable dominion over her fate. She arose mechanically, a ghastly pallor overshadowing her countenance. And she felt perhaps more on my account than on her own. She well knew the horror this meeting must occasion me, and doubtless some dread was mingled in her feelings, at the idea of the manner in which her husband might behave towards me. But I was determined not to be the cause of adding to her uneasiness, and mastered the inward disgust and aversion produced by that man's hateful proximity. For her sake I commanded myself so far as to repress, whilst forced to breathe the polluted atmosphere of his presence, all demonstrations of my loathing repugnance, and constrain myself to assume a cold civility—God knows how mighty was the effort!

There was no surprise—no emotion of any kind manifested by the discovery of my identity. With civility and *sang froid*, he greeted me—hoped that I admired *his wife's* elegant little retreat—spoke of the bustle and heat of London, from which it was pleasant occasionally to es-



cape. He, at first, scarcely noticed Sybil—who stood as if a withering blight had fallen upon her—nor deigned more than a glance of disgust at the young creature who lay upon her little couch near the spot, and who seemed also to shrink from her father's approach. Indeed, I heard her whisper in German to the maid, who came to attend the unwelcome visitor, with a troubled and anxious countenance,

"Agatha, take me—take me away."

But, during the rest of the time we were forced to remain together, Fitz Hugh changed his tack. It seemed as if he took a malicious pleasure in triumphing over my former aversion to himself, and the jealous guardianship I had exercised over his conquered victim, by thrusting before me, an exhibition of the power of dominion he held over her. It was not long however, that I endured this probation. Even to Sybil herself, my presence now became torture—humiliation too heavy to bear. That Fitz Hugh would outstay me, she was assured. Therefore, the following morning after an agonized parting, in which blessings and thanks were showered on my head by the unhappy being, I, with a heart torn by harrowing compassion, left the sweet spot—unmeet abode for dark and blighted spirits.

My next visit was to the London house of the Mordaunts. There had I stopped on my way into Surrey, and apprised my early friend of the object and destination of my journey; promising to repair to Grosvenor Square on my return, to inform her of all particulars of my sad mission.

With anxious solicitude, and tears of pity, Lady Mordaunt received my melancholy details. Her husband also expressed much compassion, and interest in my report—but that was all. When Lady Mordaunt tearfully declared how willingly—if it could prove in any way consolatory to the unfortunate one—she would write to her, or even visit her, Sir William placed his decided *veto* upon any such proceeding. Pity—the sincerest pity might be felt, and any service, not comprising personal intercourse, might be afforded to one in the situation of the unhappy Mrs. Fitz Hugh; but on the part of Lady Mordaunt—a wife—a mother! for the sake both of example, and the laws of society, nothing further, in his opinion, could ever be admitted.

I asked the sternly sensitive man, his judgment on a point, on which I stood in doubt. Should I, or should I not—reveal to the girls the fact of my having been with their mother?

No—decidedly not—he was surprised at my asking the question. The less familiar they were made with the idea of that disgraced mother the better. Their total alienation from her in thought and acquaintance, was the only means which could, in some slight degree, remove the stigma, in which, their connexion with her would ever involve them. "She should be to them as one that had never been." These were his words, and they froze my blood with their rigid truth.

Lady Mordaunt said,

"William, is not this going rather too far?"

Does any crime, particularly one so sorely repented, merit so severe a chastisement, as an entire, and ever enduring separation of a mother from her children? In body they may be parted, but in thought and word, must she be blotted from the knowledge of her own offspring?"

"I was not speaking in reference to the unfortunate woman herself—her punishment in this life must be borne—but of the innocent sufferers from her misconduct—the children—more especially her daughters. You know the proverb which the world so generally adopts, 'As is the mother, so is the daughter.' It may be but a prejudice in a case like theirs, still it is one hard to counteract. Indeed, I confess," and he glanced to the further extremity of the large saloon, where sat his eldest son, now a handsome young guardsman, "it is one which in *certain cases*, I could not separate from my own mind."

An expression of regret passed over Lady Mordaunt's countenance, at these plain spoken words of the baronet, and they also distressed me; for I had marked and understood the smile, which played on her features, as she listened to her son, when on my first arrival, he had come eagerly forward to inquire after the "splendid Sybil," and the "good, kind, Mary!"

## CHAPTER XLVI.

"Thou pitiest me," she said,  
With lips that faintly smiled—  
"As here I watch beside my dead,  
My fair and precious child.  
"But know the time-worn heart may be  
By pangs in this world riven,  
Keener than theirs who yield, like me,  
"An angel thus to Heaven!"

MRS. HEMANS.

For the next year Sybil was unable to leave her Surrey abode, from the progress of the disease, and increased lingering sufferings of the poor child, Mara. During that time I often heard from her, but it was not till the January following, that I again found myself approaching Rose Cottage—not as before, on foot, through green and flowery paths, but borne along in a chaise through roads thick with the snow, which like one large, cold, white sheet, clad the country around.

The Cottage too, before a verdant bower, was now shrouded in this blank—unvarying covering—all comfortless and silent.

Agatha with her pale sad face met me at the door and admitted me—"Where was Mrs. Fitz Hugh?" I asked.

It was in consequence of hearing from the faithful attendant how her mistress, by constant, unwearying watchings, was exhausting her frame, that I had come to see my poor Sybil. The woman silently motioned me to follow her to one of the rooms, which I entered.

There was something in the aspect of the apartment, which at once struck with a strange chill upon my heart, though I saw only within it, those whom I had expected to find—the mother and her child! But no—with them was another. It was *his* presence I felt—and that was *Death*!

I saw it but by one dismal sign alone, for on her little couch still lay the young Mara—even as on my first visit I had beheld her,—only now in this cold room with snowdrops at her head and at her feet, instead of the summer roses which had before overshadowed her.

Now too those radiant eyes which had given expression to the little wan features, were closed as if she slept—not the unquiet moaning slumber in which I had formerly seen her, but so calm and still—the long lashes pressed “with such a weight of rest” upon her colorless cheek.

And by the small white couch sat Sybil, pale and motionless, but with a countenance more peaceful—bearing less of desolate sorrow, than I had seen it before manifest. There she sat, seeming as little to heed the icy chill of that fireless apartment, as she—the little slumberer, whose spirit had fled to that land of light—

“*Wo kein schnee mehr ist.*”

Yes, for that one dismal sign of death of which I spoke, told me that so it was—the small open coffin which stood raised on tressels by the child’s couch! I shuddered when I cast my eyes upon it, for this was the first time I had looked on death and its awful appendages. But again I turned my eyes on its little owner, and on her face, there was that which seemed to smile with placid, complacent satisfaction upon those outward circumstances, which struck my heart with dread. My spirit was rebuked and I burst into tears.

“Weep not, Felicie,” said the calm mourner, as she arose, took my hand, and solemnly embraced me; “there is naught here to call for tears. You have shed enough, dear friend, for the living—waste them not for this little freed angel. I have sat here—but have not wept, Felicie, since she closed her eyes—I have not sorrowed—oh no! ‘*If ye loved me, ye would rejoice, because I go to my Father.*’ These words seem now breathing from those calm lips, from which for long I have heard naught but stifled moans of pain, or more heart-rending still, on which I have beheld the patient smile, called forth to soothe the mental agony of the wretched mother, who, in the dark hours of midnight, when sin lies heaviest on the soul, would fancy to hear in each sad groan of that innocent sufferer—‘I bear your sin—oh my Mother!’

“Yes, I did love her, Felicie—how could I, day after day, night after night, witness the angelic fortitude and patience worthy of a saint, evinced by that sin-visited child, and not love her, even had she not been mine own? Therefore do I greatly rejoice, that the angels whom she loved, have come to her deliverance, and carried her gentle soul to the bosom of that Father, whose e’en on earth she was.

“‘I am not alone,’ she would often say to me, when my selfish misery caused me to seek solitude, there to brood over blessings gone, forgetful of her loneliness, and I had said on re-joining her—

“‘Mara, my poor child, have I left you alone very long?’—‘No Mother, not alone, for the Father is with me!’ Felicie! ought I then to weep

because she has done with pain and sorrow, and has joined the white robed innocents round the throne of the Lamb?”

But the mother did now weep, though not those bitter burning tears, which had before scorched her pallid cheeks. And I blessed that little spiritless form.

Mara! in bitterness had her name been given, but by the spirit of grace—by her faith on earth and holy death, she was the instrument chosen by God, to cast this healing branch of Alvah into the bitter fountain, and the waters had been made sweet.

“*Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings hast thou ordained strength! I thank Thee, oh Father, that Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes!*”

Thus in adoring gratitude I exclaimed, as the mother told me more and more of the child Mara’s concluding hours on earth; and as I looked on that little departed, death seemed robbed of half its terrors. And soon it seemed to my heart, that without a pang I could have seen all those most dear to me like her, yet have shed no tear that was not sweet and blissful, compared with those of weary bitterness and woe, which I had wept over the living.

I was then no judge of the effect of death in all its agonizing sharpness. I saw it for the first time, and in its mildest form—a blessed liberator from a life of suffering. I had yet to see it come in the shape of a dread destroying angel, sweeping over the bright—the joyous—the blessed of the earth!

“The beautiful that seemed too much our own ever to die.”

*Rachel wept and would not be comforted, because her children were no more*  
And

“When darkness from the vainly doting sight, covers the beautiful.”

we indeed feel that death is “the remediless sorrow and none else.”

To that little breathless form as long as it remained to her, did Sybil seem to consider it a sacred duty to consecrate her every thought and feeling—Till beneath the snowy ground she had, with Agatha and myself, seen the little body committed with as “sure and certain hope” as ever filled the hearts of mourners, the last affecting records connected with that youthful saint, was the sadly soothing theme on which she alone manifested any desire to dwell.

But when all was over—when she returned to the home now made unto her desolate, she felt, indeed, that henceforth there was no resting place for her lonely heart on earth, but where her living lost ones dwelt. Not only of her children, but of her parents did she inquire eagerly. Might she not hope to look on them again?

I could but tell her how her father thought with pitying tenderness on his lost daughter, but that he feared his strength was insufficient to undergo the fruitless agony of an interview, which, from the circumstance of that one fatal individual connected with her, could but be fraught with unmitigated, hopeless pain.

For her mother—I had to tell her of a com-



pletely broken mind and constitution. Life had indeed become to that afflicted lady, labor and sorrow, and her state was most trying to all around her.

She dwelt almost entirely at Oakleigh, and it was not considered expedient that her grandchildren should be much with her; her loss of memory having deprived her of all pleasure in former interests and affections.

"Oh, to be allowed to tend, night and day, as a hired servant upon my mother!" was the exclamation of Sybil; "but even if that were possible, would she know me, and suffer my presence?"

Alas! I doubted much if the unfortunate daughter would be recognized by the afflicted parent; at all events, I foresaw in a meeting—even if feasible—nothing but what must prove painful and unsatisfactory in every way, and I could not encourage the idea.

How it tore my heart to leave the unhappy Sybil so desolate and alone, when the period arrived to which I had allotted my absence from those, whose demands upon my time and thoughts were so urgent!

I never returned to Llewellyn without finding my presence much required. My younger pupil, I was certain, divined the object of my mysterious expeditions, and this made her restless and uncomfortable; so that I ever found dear Mary harassed and care worn, from the anxious endeavors she had been forced to employ to soothe her sister's spirits, and prevent her father being hurt, or troubled, as he always was by perceiving any symptom of distress in his child.

How the mother's heart longed to behold these daughters, now in their spring of womanhood! I had not had the heart to portray them to her but partially; for I knew that the full description of the features and characteristics of one, could not be void of pain to her feelings.

Fruitless forbearance!—Every ingredient mingled in the cup of retribution, was in its time to be tasted by this wretched woman—no human solicitude could save her from it in its full bitterness!

When I told her of a proposed expedition of our whole party to the neighborhood of Eton, the following Easter, in order to give pleasure to Bertie, she said:—

"Felicie! I must be there to see them once more together. I will not pain you by the sight of me. I will watch well my time and opportunity. You know not how cautious my miserable woe has become."

## CHAPTER XLVII.

"Come forth, O ye children of gladness, come!  
Where the violets lie, may now be your home.  
Ye of the rose cheek and dew bright eye,  
And the bounding footstep, to meet me fly!  
With the lyre, the wreath, and the joyous lay,  
Come forth to the sunshine; I MAY NOT STAY."

MRS. HEMANS.

We spent the Easter vacation at Windsor. Looking back now on that brief period, it seems still decked in hues of undimmed brilliancy. The beauty of the spring—the happiness of be-

ing re-united, and under such new and pleasant circumstances—so much to show, and to be shown! Every cloud seemed to roll away from the felicity of the young ones!

"There were graceful heads, with their ringlets bright,  
Which tossed in the breeze with a play of light;  
There were eyes, in whose glistening laughter lay,  
No faint remembrance of dull decay.  
There were steps that flew o'er the cowslip's head,  
As if for a banquet all earth were spread;  
There were voices that rung through the sapphire sky,  
And had not a sound of mortality!"

Even the sorrow stricken father—inspired by their glad influence—seemed to catch some portion of the exhilaration of his happy children, and to lift his head and smile. I alone saw that which saddened my heart too deeply, to allow it much participation in this spirit of delight.

How could I joy, when once I had caught sight in St. George's Chapel, of that tall, veiled figure in her mourning robe, gazing from afar on the bright trio, as side by side they stood, joining their clear young voices to the exulting chaunts of Easter praise and thanksgiving? Did I not know that the sight—the sounds, must fill her heart to bursting—that even if in contemplating them, she could have found a gleam of pleasure, there was another form standing near, like a pale ghost—who, to look upon, must have overshadowed to her soul all that was bright, and "forbid her to rejoice." And when we walked abroad, did I not ever feel as if the gaze of the alien was still tracking her children's footsteps—watching—waiting—though we saw her not?

I did not discover the residence of the miserable Mrs. Fitz Hugh during the time we remained at Windsor. She evidently did not wish me to ascertain it—and I abstained from making any inquiry, feeling that it might only prove painful to us both. Neither did we encounter each other. Once only—passing by a cluster of thick-spreading oaks in the park, I heard young Sybil exclaim,

"Bertie! what made you look so earnestly at that woman, standing beneath the branches of those trees?"

And the boy answered,

"Because I am almost certain it was the same lady who took me into her house when I fell into the water. Do you not remember my telling you all about it—and of the poor little girl? The lady—if that is the same—is now in deep mourning. I am afraid the child is dead. Poor woman!—how shocking to lose all her children!"

Just before leaving Windsor, Mr. Lennard received a letter from Mr. St. John, which suggested the idea of giving us the treat of visiting Oxford and all its interesting features. Bertie's holiday term had already been exceeded; he could not, therefore, be of the party.

The last morning of our stay at Oxford, was to be spent in completing the survey of all that was considered by Mr. St. John worthy of our notice. In the afternoon we were to depart.

Mr. Lennard did not accompany us on this concluding expedition—he was not very well, and appeared more depressed than usual—but he insisted upon committing us all to the escort of Mr. St. John.

The grand object of interest was some antiquity which took us a few miles out of the town.

The party returned from the excursion in high spirits—no presentiment of evil weighing them down; the girls highly delighted with the morning's amusement, and all eagerness to describe everything they had seen to their father.

We found a servant at the door of the Hotel we occupied, looking out for our arrival with evident anxiety, and he immediately greeted us with the startling intelligence, that Mr. Lennard had set off for Eton two hours previously, in a chaise and four. Horses were ready for us if we chose to follow. But—the man added—his master had left no orders—had not even said, where the ladies were to be found, consequently his search for us, with an earlier intelligence of the event, had proved fruitless.

"But why—why had he gone! What had called him to Eton?" was the repeated exclamation, and with terror we awaited the reply.

"Mr. Bertie had met with an accident—a dispatch had arrived with the tidings."

The man scarcely knew the danger or extent of the evil, for Mr. Lennard had started within five minutes after the message had been received.

In this torturing uncertainty we had to depart, with as little delay as possible. Mr. St. John implored to be allowed to accompany us, and accordingly formed one of the party.

Though our anxiety was intense, how little were our fears raised to the height accordant with the direful reality!

## CHAPTER XLVIII.

Awake!

"'Tis not the hour of slumber; why so pale?  
What hast thou? Thou wert full of life this morn!"

"'Twas a blow,  
And but a blow. Stir—stir—nay, only stir!"

Oh! for a word more of that gentle voice,  
That I may bear to hear my own again!—BYRON.

It was evening when we reached Eton.

We gave directions to be at once driven to the tutor's house, where Bertie was located.

The girls were by this time pale and nervous, uncertain what to anticipate. Mr. St. John supported them into the house, from which Mr. Lennard's own servant came forth to meet us.

"What has happened?" I inquired with shrinking dread.

The man could not answer; he turned away his head, and burst into tears. Then truly, horror and dismay seized all our hearts. Sybil became frantic in the agony of suspense. Soon—too soon however, the fearful truth was communicated.

"Master Lennard had met with a serious accident—was in extreme danger—but was still alive—Mr. Lennard was with him."

At these terrible words—"still alive!" young Sybil with a shriek broke from us, and rushed towards the door of a room, which the speaker, by his suppressed voice, and significant glance seemed to indicate; we followed her and entered the apartment—there upon a bed lay Bertie!

No terrible signs of injury—no wounds or scars met our gaze; and though his dear face was pale, his eyes were open and bright—but ah! not with their own sweet animated light of love and intellect! And when his sisters called in suppressed tones of tender-agonized alarm—"Bertie! dear Bertie!" no answering, grateful look came, to tell them they were heard—those blue eyes were fixed—the pupils distended, and I saw by the whole expression of the face, that a fearful torpor was weighing down his brain.

The father was seated by the side of the poor boy, his gaze riveted with agonized intensity upon the countenance of the sufferer; but at the exclamation of his daughters, he shook his head with a look of utter despair; then a deep groan burst from his lips, and he hid his face upon the bed.

The girls now flung themselves upon their knees. Sybil, with passionate ejaculations of anguish, called again on him, who heard her not; whilst Mary, with clasped hands, and up-raised eyes, cried in her misery upon the God of mercy to save her brother.

There were surgeons and physicians in the room, and they afterwards agreed, that never had they witnessed a scene so terribly touching and impressive.

With feelings approaching to awe, they gazed upon Mary, who with her golden hair flung back—her face raised in all the meek energy of spiritual supplication, looked indeed—as I heard they remarked—a very Saint Cecilia.

But at that moment I could heed naught but the beloved sufferer.

Mr. St. John, with grief almost equal to our own, inquired of the medical attendants some particulars as to the cause, and nature of the condition, in which we found this precious child. I strained my ears to catch the whispered reply.

"A blow received in a fight with a school-fellow—" And then a fearful shake of the head, and portentous looks were the continuation of the answer to the rest of the demand.

Mr. St. John approached Mr. Lennard with a few low-breathed words of sympathy.

The father wrung his hand in silence, then, glancing with sad pity upon the deep distress of the two girls, made a sign that they should be withdrawn from the harrowing spectacle.

Sybil, exhausted by her violent grief, yielded herself passively to my efforts to lead her away, whilst Mr. St. John gently overruling Mary's touching entreaties to be allowed to remain with her father, supported her to the apartment into which we were shown.

A youth was seated at a table, leaning his face upon his hands, in whom we recognized Johnny Mordaunt, as he started up on our entrance.

His countenance was expressive of so much grief, that Mary and Sybil, drawn towards him by this heart-felt sympathy, seized his hands, and distractedly implored him to tell them the cause of the present dreadful state of their darling Bertie.

"It was in a quarrel," the youth murmured, "that Lennard had received the blow."

"What, their kind—their gentle Bertie! How could he have provoked, or have been provoked to such fierce violence?"



"Yes, he *was* kind—he was *most* gentle," the youth replied, deeply affected, "but he was as much a lion as a lamb, when there was reason. He was not one to stand still and hear his mother called foul names."

I shall never forget the terrible scream, and the gesture of horror, with which Sybil dashed away young Mordaunt's hand, and flung herself into my arms; whilst Mary stood like one bereft of life and motion, then fainted away. When I next looked at her, she lay perfectly unconscious, and supported by Mr. St. John.

The poor youth's incautious information was but too correct. This was the real fact.

A boy known to be somewhat below par, in point of family pretensions, but a capital cricketer, had been proposed as a member of an exclusive club to be composed, for the ensuing season, by the boys of Bertie's form. There had been some demur amongst the juvenile aristocrats on the subject of this young plebian's admittance into their corps; but this spirit was chiefly manifested by a youth of the name of Lord Charles Somers, one of the party. It was on the fatal morning in question, that Bertie Lennard's voice in the matter was demanded, and he, without hesitation, laughed at the ridiculous scruples, and by a few plain, sensible words, made the others feel them to be such.

"If Thompson were considered worthy of classing with them in the schoolroom, why not in the cricket field, where he was as much, as in the former place, their equal—if not superior, in point of proficiency? True his father was a retired tradesperson, but what was that to them? The family was respectable—the youth himself most gentlemanlike."

In short, all seemed immediately persuaded by Bertie's arguments—all but Somers, who, naturally of a violent temper, was chafed and mortified by thus having his opinion overruled by another—that other his junior; he exclaimed—insolently taking up the last words—

"Oh yes; if it comes to that, the respectability of parents—in one sense of the word, Thompson may have certainly greater claims than some others, to stand amongst us."

"What do you mean by that, Somers?" asked Bertie, firmly—for he could not allow to pass unnoticed, words which, by the speaker's marked tone and look, could not be mistaken to be levelled at him.

"I hope," he continued, with a proud smile, "you do not pretend to call the respectability of *my* family into question!"

The poor boy was thinking at that moment alone of his father. But the speech had scarcely passed his lips, when a dread recollection seemed to have flashed across his mind. He turned deadly pale, and meeting—as he thought—a triumphant sneer upon Somers' countenance, he returned his gaze more fiercely, and cried in a tone of angry defiance:—

"Well, sir?"

The youth thus challenged to carry on his attack, and still under the influence of inflamed feelings, gave the fatal reply:—

"Well, sir! I do not pretend to speak a word against your respectability of birth on *one* side—

but every body knows that your mother—How can you answer that pray!"

"I have but one answer to give to any one, who *dares* to say so!" cried the boy, in a voice, which thrilled, as much with agony as rage, and springing forward like a young tiger upon his prey, he dealt the aggressor a fierce blow on his face, with his clenched fist.

It was instantly returned. The enraged opponent struck with deadly force upon the young offender's head—and Bertie fell.

Somers was in a moment on his knees, assisting, in alarm and contrition, his companions to raise his fallen foe, and attempt his restoration.

"He was but stunned—he would soon open his eyes—he would soon revive."

But, no! The eyes *did* open, but with a strange glassy expression.

Assistance was now called for—medical aid summoned—the most skilful practitioners that Windsor afforded—but in vain!—no sensible consciousness could be restored. The wretched father arrived to find his beloved son in a hopeless condition, unaware of his presence—in a fearful stupor, which the doctors gave little hope could be exchanged for aught but slumber, still more profound. The first surgeons of London were sent for in haste, but ere they could arrive, the fiat had gone forth too surely, that *he must die*.

The dismay which prevaded the whole college, was intense; and the unfortunate perpetrator of the deed was in a state bordering on frenzy. The report of the catastrophe quickly spread through Windsor and its environs, though there were efforts made to hush up the particulars of the sad affair.

The unhappy father had not yet cared to make any inquiry concerning the cause of the misfortune. In the first bewilderment of his agony, it was enough for him to know, that his son was lying before him—so altered from his bright—his loving boy! His whole soul was absorbed in watching for some returning gleam of the former light of those sweet eyes—he had not thought to ask *how* this dark blow had fallen upon him.

But, some hours after the distressing scene, following his daughter's arrival, his attention was attracted by deep sobbing, proceeding from the opposite side of the bed, to that on which he sat.

It was young Mordaunt, who had crept into the room, and thus given way to his feelings on beholding his poor friend;—for the youth, though of a disposition very opposite to the gay—lively—spirited Bertie, had imbibed a most strong attachment for him.

They were almost alone—Mr. St. John only being present, though a nurse was in attendance in an adjoining chamber, and a physician still in the house. The father was touched by this emotion on the part of the boy. He stretched out his hand to him across the bed, saying, in a broken voice of anguish,

"But, dear Johnny, how—how did this happen!—Tell me—I have had no strength to ask—In a quarrel, did they not say?"

"Yes!" replied Mordaunt. "Poor Somers

is half mad with grief—he was in a passion—provoked, when he said the things he did, about Lennard's mother. He would have died rather than have returned poor Bertie's blow, had he known what—what—would happen."

"His mother!" murmured the distracted listener.

"Yes;" answered the youth, "Somers called his mother bad names—and poor Lennard struck him.

"Sybil! Sybil! you are indeed my destroyer!" cried the wretched man, starting up, as if a bullet had pierced his heart; then again sinking down, he hid his face once more in the bed.

And where was the miserable woman thus apostrophised—had the direful tidings reached her ears, and in her solitude—alone?

This thought often flashed across my mind in that dreadful time of tribulation and distress. But I could not leave the afflicted house to seek her out; indeed, I myself was too full of anguish of mind—too absorbed in watching, to have energy for any such exertion.

However, on the second of these terrible days, I learnt from the servant of the house, that a lady in mourning had been at the door on the evening after the accident, in a state bordering on distraction—that she had seemed inclined to enter, but at length, on hearing that Mr. Lennard was with the young gentleman, had suffered her attendant to draw her away. Since then the servant had been hourly at the door to make inquiries.

It was the third evening. The London practitioner, with grave, compassionate concern upon his countenance, had left the house to return to London. He could not be spared to stay to watch a case so utterly hopeless—a few hours and all would probably be over.

The father still sat and watched the slackening breath—the glazing eye—"love mastering agony." I too was there, seated apart, and at length saw the door open slowly—and before my grief bewildered sight appeared the tall, dark form of a woman.

She approached the bed with solemn step—then sat down beside—*her son!*—for it was indeed the wretched mother.

And thus did Albert and Sybil meet once more!

The light fell feebly upon that haggard face, and revealed it to him, who sat opposite, with his countenance of unutterable woe. He started with a look of horror—then murmured, in a tone of fearful agitation,

"Good God!—Sybil!"

"Yes, Albert!" she answered, in a hollow, but determined voice, "I am—*his Mother!*—I have a right—I told them I was his Mother, and they could not deny me—will you?"—her voice died away.

A groan from Mr. Lennard was the only reply.

And those two sat together in silence—dread—immutable silence—hour after hour of that fearful—*fearful* night—even till the spirit of their fair boy had gently glided from its earthly dwelling.

And then they must once more part . . . They must not mourn together—they cannot crave each other's sympathy.

Ah, who could paint—who can wish to gaze on such a picture!

## CHAPTER XLIX.

But now 'tis past—I may not mourn,  
For thou, beloved boy, art free;  
And I may yet to thee return,  
Though thou canst ne'er return to me."

REV. T. DALZ.

But she, the youthful mourner there,  
Was bowed beneath her first despair;  
The first—ah! none can ever know  
That agony again—  
When youth's own force is on the blow,  
Its keenness is the pain."—L. E. L.

NEED I tell that the Father raised no more his drooping head, from the time he journeyed back to Llewellyn with his dead child, to bury him in the vaults of his forefathers—but "went on his way sorrowing"—silently fading day by day.

Yes, silently!—for he murmured not. He bowed in meek resignation to Him who had thus afflicted his soul. And he mourned not as one without hope—for he knew, that though his child could not return, he should soon go to him.

It was not thus with the other mourners for the lost one. *Death* is ever terrible to the young—still more so when, as a hitherto unknown guest, it visits their home. And how trebly bitter as in this instance—accompanied by every circumstance calculated to augment its darkness and distress.

Their mother—their wretched mother had brought it all upon them!

It may be imagined how differently the two girls bore their sorrow.

I will not dwell on the meek endurance of Mary's deep grief: such a sister as she had been—so loving and beloved! The sharpness of her feelings could not but be intense. But she became the comforting angel of her father's bruised spirit—supporter of his failing strength!

Her reward is not on earth—human praise is too unworthy an offering to such deserts!

But Sybil—poor Sybil! she was, as yet, too much of a child of this world, thus to endure her trials. Her health and spirits became such as not only to call forth anxiety and concern, but to add a new distress to the heart of the stricken father.

The medical attendant at length prescribed for her, mental diversion, change of scene and circumstances; and the Mordaunts were most kind in their solicitude to forward the performance of this advice, by proposing that Sybil should visit them in London.

At first the young girl's aversion to this plan was extreme; both from the idea of parting from her father and sister, and the repugnance she had attached to the thoughts of facing society—even that of the most intimate. She—whose name must have become a proverb—a



by-word amongst men—to expose herself to the shame which would inevitably be her portion in the world!

But all this was finally overruled by her friends, and she was taken to London, to try the effect of the medicine of—the world, on a young, blighted spirit.

About a year had elapsed since the death of her brother, when young Sybil found herself in the metropolis, during its gayest season; and the admiration and homage she received, were excessive, notwithstanding all her disadvantages—poor child!

Perhaps the interest excited by her appearance, was heightened in no small degree by the but too sad notoriety of her name, rendered now doubly conspicuous from her extreme beauty, and enormous fortune. It was difficult for Lady Mordaunt to resist the importunity of others, and at the same time the gratification of her own pride, in leading forth so bright a star.

And Sybil herself!—Lady Mordaunt wrote at first that her charge was amused and excited by her change of existence. No doubt she must have been! What girl of seventeen—especially one of Sybil's disposition—could fail—for a time at least—to have some portion of the most acute sorrow, blunted by the intoxication and whirl of a life to which she had been so little accustomed! The father!—what a touching smile of sadness passed over his wan face as he listened to such accounts!

And he would say—while he glided his thin hand over the fair head of his elder daughter, as she paused, with a half-pleased—half-pondering expression, whilst reading these records concerning her sister,

“My poor Mary—why should *you* be cut off from all this!”

“I, father! Oh, what should I do there!—what should I do any where but by your side? Poor Sybil! it will do her good perhaps—but I do not require such alleviations—Indeed I could not bear them!”

And Sybil, indeed—too soon did she learn, that the world excites, but does not soothe.

The tone of Lady Mordaunt's confidential letters to myself speedily began to change. She spoke, with regret, of her young charge's sudden turn against those pursuits in which she had at first taken pleasure—her gloom and reserve in public—her tenacious sensitiveness—her suspicious shrinking from any advances of admirers and friends. Lady Mordaunt feared that she might have overheard occasional remarks connected with her mother's story, which could not fail to be torture to her quick, jealous disposition. Her Ladyship added, that she had ceased urging her to go into public—remarking also, how melancholy would be the future, if such a state of feeling were always to continue.

In another future letter, she mentioned that Sybil had been happier of late. She wrote thus:

“My eldest son is at home for a few weeks—and being an old friend, Sybil seems to enjoy his society, and is interested and amused by conversing with him. He joins his father and Sybil in their rides. William's leave is but short, and the poor girl's mood seems so inimical to any feeling like *love*, that my husband's

scruples, as to the prudence of the young people being thus thrown together, appear to have melted away. But Sybil is such a splendid creature—and so talented, commanding, and fascinating! and our dear Willie—so handsome and charming, that really, Felicie—were the time not so *very short* for them to be together—I could scarcely think it possible but that the finale—Sir William would so much disapprove—must come to pass.”

Does it then require long time—days, weeks, months, and years—to enable human beings to love one another? Does the heart bend slowly and suspiciously—lay up one kind thought after another, till the measure of its affections be full? Not so with the young and unsophisticated—like Sybil Lennard and William Mordaunt.

A letter arrived from Sybil, saying she must immediately return to us.

Lady Mordaunt wrote at the same time, and seemed surprised at this sudden determination. The announcement had been made, just before her son had somewhat abruptly returned to his regiment. She had not pressed Sybil for her reason for thus deserting them, and only felt rejoiced that the dear girl would depart in radiant looks and in brighter spirits than she had long remembered to have seen her.

We had removed to Sidmouth, for mild air had been prescribed for Mr. Lennard—and there Sybil was to join us.

She came—and how changed did she appear before us!—how unlike the dark, misery-blighted girl she had departed, after the first emotion of the meeting with her father had subsided! And the hectic flush upon the before pallid cheeks of the invalid, and the deceptive brilliancy of the grief-dimmed eye, she noted but as a token of improvement in the health of that adored being.

Her return, and the brilliant alteration visible in herself, *did* revive and animate the sufferer for a time; whilst Mary and I—we—with our subdued—depressed spirits, having existed in so different a sphere, for the last few months—gazed in wonder at the effect worked on this patient of the world, by the remedies it holds forth.

But there seemed something stronger—deeper, than the mere exhilarating excitement with which it may invest its votaries—some softer—though at the same time warmer influence—an influence, under whose dominion earth seems brighter, and all beneath the sun more light—even every sorrow less heavy, and hard to endure.

## CHAPTER L.

“Look, where she stands! Hath the magician love  
Touched her to stone? No, no; she breathes, she moves;  
Beauty sits bravely in her glittering eye:  
And passion stains her cheek. What thoughts are these,  
Unfolding like rose flowers at dawn of day?—  
Methinks she sees the sunny future lie  
Basking before her.”—BARRY CORNWALL.

MARY and I soon learnt what was the magic

draught—which in a world the young Sybil had seemed to shrink from, as if all therein were bitter and distasteful—she had quaffed, and found so sweet to her taste.

When alone with us the first night of her arrival, she broke forth and told us all.

She loved, and was beloved!

Not with girl-like confusion did she tell her tale. Her cheek burnt, but it was with proud ecstasy. She felt her love as the exalting power, which had transformed the world—before so dark—to a region bright and beautiful.

All the odium she had once dreaded, now seemed poor—contemptible. She was loved—yes loved, with a generous, spontaneous, enthusiastic love; not with that cold, calculating measure, such as she had heard that in the world they loved.

Then the deep—grateful adoration, with which *he* received her affection! he who was so far superior to every other she had seen—so noble—so good—so beautiful!

And this hero of Sybil's romance was indeed young William Mordaunt. Handsome—delightful, as I knew him to be, yet a young Guardsman of twenty-one, however amiable, I could scarcely fancy sufficiently dignified, to be the hero of such a heroine. But how little was I qualified to understand such matters. And then other thoughts and feelings suggested themselves to my mind, filling it with anxiety and dread, for I remembered the words of Sir William, once spoken in my presence.

Mary between smiles and tears—half pleased—half bewildered, listened to her sister's eloquent confessions.

How far was Mary from divining, that she too, was “loved best on earth,” though as yet worshipped secretly and silently, by one feeling heart!

Sybil proceeded with her story, and told us how that as soon as William Mordaunt had confessed to her his attachment, and drawn from her an acknowledgment of her own, craving permission to announce to his parents his wish to make her his wife—she had begged him on the contrary to depart, and to defer that divulgement till she had left his father's roof; under which—after what had occurred... she deemed it neither proper nor agreeable to remain.

“It was hard for me,” she proudly said, “to keep from dear Lady Mordaunt, a declaration which I am sure would have given her pleasure; still my feelings revolted against so doing. And Sir William, though ever most kind to me, is so punctilious and severe, that I am certain he would have considered it an indelicacy on my part, had I been the one to have made the communication. So William is to return as soon as possible and declare all to his parents, and then he will write to dear Papa, or come here himself to ask me from him. Dear Mary—dear Mademoiselle, will not darling Papa be surprised—and will he not be glad!—the son of such old and valued friends!”

Poor girl! never for a moment, in the blind confidence into which her new found delight had plunged her senses—never for a moment did she imagine, that shoals and impediments could start up to render rugged the flowery

smoothness of her true love path; but love is proverbially blind.

Who indeed, not aware like myself, of Sir William's sentiments on the subject of such a connexion, would have supposed that Sybil Lennard with all her attractions, moreover, co-heiress to immense riches, might not expect to be received with eagerness into the most distinguished family of the land? But from what I knew of the uncompromising nature of his ideas, I trembled as I beheld the happy assurance of my cherished pupil.

She observed my dejection, and with some suspicious surprise, asked whether I did not sympathise in her felicity.

I had not the heart to say more, than that I thought that they were both so very young.

She smiled in scorn at this objection, considering it as the prudent scruples of a governess.

Should she prepare her dear father for the reception of the letter—or wait for William's arrival? I earnestly advised the last mentioned plan. Any agitation—unnecessary expectation, or suspense was likely to prove prejudicial and irritating to Mr. Lennard's nerves, in his present delicate state of health.

“But this cannot be called *suspense* Mademoiselle!” was Sybil's eager remark. “It can only be a certain and joyful expectation. What will prevent William from flying to me, when once his parents' consents obtained...and do you think there is the slightest chance of their refusing that?”

I could only reply sadly,

“Dear Sybil, set not your heart too fondly, and securely, on any hope in this world.”

Mr. Lennard indeed was fading so gently—so gradually—so little outward ailment was visible—even his mental sufferings were endured so silently—concealed under the cloak of patient sweetness, and solicitude to spare others, uneasiness on his account, that Sybil could not—would not perceive the aim, much less the truth, of my dark insinuations.

For days and even weeks therefore, she lived upon the joyful excitement of the expected tidings, or the personal appearance of her lover—Buoyed up to the utmost by hope, she would not seem to feel dismay, though time did pass, far exceeding that period, she had at first calculated upon, as the moment when all should be decided.

No letter—no lover came!

Daily she climbed the steep hills, between which the lovely valley we inhabited was situated. It seemed as if by bodily exercise, she would have exhausted the excitement and impatience, she felt rising within her soul. She almost tired out her more delicately framed sister, who besides having no such lively emotions to propel her, was ever, when absent from her father, as one whose spirit was struggling to return to his loved presence. She would listen however with anxious interest to the excuses and reasons, Sybil would eagerly frame, to aid and reassure her own mind, in its faith and reliance upon all being right.

One evening I accompanied my pupils in their rambles, for Mr. St. John was on a visit to us and remained with Mr. Lennard.



We happened to approach close to what appeared the brink of one of the high, wild cliffs or precipices which overhang the Devonshire coast, to inhale the fresh gale rising from the ocean beneath. There was no danger in so doing, for a wide grassy ledge, in reality sloped off from what appeared the edge. Sybil proposed that we should sit down and rest there; but paused and hesitated on our nearer approach, perceiving that the spot was already occupied by the figure of a woman in a deep mourning garb.

Her tall form was bent almost double—her head rested on her folded arms as if in utter weariness.

She started and looked up on hearing our voices, and at the sight of that ghastly, death-like face, that countenance of fixed, hopeless, reckless despair, which was lifted towards them, the girls shrunk back in astonished dismay.

I also started—for what were my feelings on recognizing *their Mother*?

After my first movement of terrified surprise had in a measure subsided, my inward ejaculation was—"Have you wandered so far, troubled spirit, and tracked us even here? What avails it!—naught but increase of misery attends your steps—to yourself, and all belonging to you."

The next moment my heart smote me for the impatient cruelty of the thought—and I stood in painful embarrassment how to act. Must I look coldly upon her, as on a stranger? Yes, so it must be—for I felt that anything would be preferable, to thus suddenly presenting the daughters to their ill-omened—their fallen Mother!

I therefore, in a tone which the girls interpreted—and not erroneously—for affright, signed to them to follow me, and contented myself with merely casting a sidelong look of significance at the Mother—unmarked—unheeded, however, I believe by her, who remained immovable as the jutting rock beneath us—absorbed in her wild—fixed scrutiny of the two fair young beings, affording so striking a contrast to herself.

"Was she mad?" they whispered in affright, as we withdrew.

I was forced, by an indefinite answer, to agree, as it were, to their supposition.

It was fully my intention to seek out, without delay, the abode of that poor, unfortunate, but as if her appearance were indeed the ominous sign of forthcoming evil—troubles were awaiting us at home, which made me even forget this determination.

I had heard that the report of the meeting of the two—he had so cruelly and effectually severed—had excited the desperate wrath of Fitz Hugh. It had availed little with him, that the interview had taken place beside the death-bed of their boy. He had hastened to Windsor, as soon as the circumstance reached his ears, and removed the wretched Mother from that place. Since that time no communication had passed between us: I was even ignorant of her abode.

## CHAPTER LI.

So bright at first, so dark at last—  
I feared it was Love's history! L. E. L.

ON entering the house on our return home, a letter was placed in my hands—which, by some mistake, had missed the morning's delivery.

How my heart sickened—my blood froze—when I beheld Lady Mordaunt's hand-writing! and Sybil's large, eager eyes were fixed upon me, her lips parted—her cheeks crimson.

But we were in the presence of our Father; and I made an effort to speak a few collected words before leaving the room, to prevent if possible, any suspicion being raised in his mind, by the emotion he might have perceived on either of our countenances. Sybil—as if her patience could not stand the suspense, abruptly quitted the room—and when I followed, I found her watching for me in a paroxysm of agitated expectation.

Sybil walked to the window, and riveted her gaze upon my countenance, as my eyes ran over the pages. It must have, by degrees, fully expressed the anguish which filled my heart—for she had soon sprung to my side—and then, with hands tightly clasped together, she cried, "Mademoiselle! is William dead?"

"No, dear Sybil—he is well—quite well."

"Then why is he not here?" she demanded imperiously.

"Because, dear Sybil," I replied, in some degree hopeful, that, from the dreadful height to which her first suspicion had arisen, the real fact would come with less fearful force; "because, as yet, Sir William withholds his consent to your union."

For one moment she stood mute—motionless! Then her whole form swelling—her voice thrilling with mingled pride and anguish—she exclaimed,

"And why—why this cruelty—this tyranny! Pray tell me all—*all*! I know the worst now, so what more have you to fear? Read—read! or show me the letter."

"No, dear child!" I said, retaining the letter; "as you say you have heard the worst—"

"But the reason—the reason!" she interrupted, with passionate impatience. "What is there in Sybil Lennard to which a prudent Father need object, as a wife for his son? Our age—is that the obstacle? God knows I have suffered enough to make my heart quite old—to damp all the ardor of youthful spirits—and he is aware of this. Felicie! I see by your countenance, and your wish to hide from me that letter, that there is another reason—some obstacle more invincible—and that I have *not* heard the worst. I must know it—I insist upon learning the truth with my own eyes."

And with resolution—for I was too weak and nervous further to withstand—she took the letter from my hands; then standing—as she tossed back her dark, clustering curls from about her face—she held it up to catch the waning light—and with more collectiveness than I had done, cast her eyes over its contents.

She read to the point to which I fearfully awaited her arrival—and then her breath be-

came suspended—her gaze riveted with a wild stare upon the paper. The next moment the letter dropped at her feet.

Raising her clasped hands, and her eyes to heaven, from between her clenched teeth, and quivering lips, there slowly and distinctively came, in the deepest and lowest accents of despair, the exclamation, "My mother! always—*always* my mother!"

"I sat in silent anguish. I had no tongue nor heart to gainsay the bitter, yet alas! too just cry of the daughter against the parent. My spirit sank too low at that moment to attempt to infuse hope or consolation.

The fatal letter ran as follows:

"Often, my dearest Felicie, have I been obliged to address you upon sad and distressing subjects; yet, at this moment, I fancy it is scarcely possible that I have ever experienced more pain than on the present occasion; for not only do I fear wounding a young, warm heart, but sorrow and regret at the destruction of my own too sanguine hopes fill my mind.

"To be explicit. You know that I have long ardently desired for my son, that he should one day become the husband of either of those sweet girls, whom I have so dearly loved since their infancy. You have of course been made acquainted with Sybil's secret, of the attachment between herself and William; a fact to which my husband, (and I perhaps too willingly) was perfectly blinded. Both Sir William and myself agree in the most entire approval of dear Sybil's conduct throughout the whole affair. It was in every way accordant with the most sensitive delicacy and propriety.

"But to come to the sad point.

"When poor William returned, and first poured forth to me his enthusiastic confession, you may imagine that my heart went with him. But I had to damp his ardent hopes. I told him of the sentiments—the prejudices, I knew his father entertained upon the subject—of the difficulty I feared he would have, in overcoming them.

"Sir William was from home at this time, and I promised on his return, to intercede in his behalf. I did so, but alas! found my husband inexorable. I will not attempt to describe the scenes that followed—the despair—the agonizing disappointment of my poor boy, and my own distress.

"Sir William too, is, I am sure, much grieved at having thus to set his face against the admitting into his family, a child of so esteemed—so venerated a friend as Mr. Lennard; not to speak of all the worldly advantages which might make a similar match so highly desirable. But these are his own words, Felicie,

"I would give my consent to my son's marrying the humblest daughter of the land, if respectability and pure fame were attached to her name and parentage—yes—in preference to the noblest and richest, with a stain, and stigma, such as is indelibly stamped on this poor girl, by her unhappy mother's crime. I owe it to yourself, William, to your future children—I owe it to the hitherto unblighted name of my family, to forbid your union with a *Sybil Lennard*!"

The rest of the letter was but an enlargement on the sentiments of Sir William, and told of his having commanded his son to return to his regiment, and that there should be no further communication on his part with the object of his attachment. To me she committed the announcement of this unhappy finale, and left it to my discretion, as to the extent of the communication to others. There was the strongest desire expressed, that Mr. Lennard should be spared the pain of a correspondence. It was an affectionate and most kind letter, but little evidently, was the writer aware of the depths and force of the love, with which the heart of poor Sybil had been inspired.

After the utterance of her dread exclamation on the subject of her mother, she had sunk into one of those moody—tearless fits of silent gloom, which I had occasionally seen follow any great, and sudden shock; and which always distressed me even more than their preceding paroxysms of passionate emotion. With her large floating eyes, fixed with an expression of such dark despair—in an attitude of restless despondency; she seemed but a soft and beautiful image, of that personification of woe presented to our sight, on the cliff, a short hour before.

I spoke to her, but she answered—heeded me not.

The door opened at length and Mary entered; the calm serenity of her face, disturbed by a shade of anxiety, which deepened much as soon as her eyes had turned from her sister to myself. She asked no questions, but sinking down by her sister's side passed her arm round her slender waist, and to her tender whisper of "Dearest—dearest Sybil!" she heard the low, startling accents breathed forth—"Yes, Mary—our mother—our mother! It is she again! She has indeed destroyed us all!—It is she who parted William from me. Now I shall die, and it is our mother that will have killed your sister, as well as your brother! And does your heart still lean towards her?"

"Yes!" she continued, "read this letter, and you will see how Sir William—and why should we blame him!—refuses to allow a *Sybil Lennard* to stain by her branded name his unspotted escutcheon!"

With fearful energy of agony, Sybil raised her clenched hands on high, then resumed—

"And the shame—for shame and humiliation I feel it is—of being thus rejected!—but I could brook it all, only to see William once again."

And that proud spirit laid low, beneath the mighty power of love, she now wept in utter misery.

Mary mingled her sympathising tears with those of her sorrowing sister, and the two young creatures sat till night darkened around them; whilst I, forcing myself to composure, went to avert, by my presence, the suspicion and anxiety, which their absence might have created in their father's mind.

The next day, and the next, the pretext of indisposition afforded the wretched girl a plea for her altered demeanor—but her heart's disease was too plainly written on her countenance.

In the mean time I had acknowledged Lady Mordaunt's letter; judging it due to the dignity



of Sybil, as well as that of her father, not to make too broad an exposure of her feelings, and condition of mind, to those who had rejected her. I was indignant for my suffering child.—However pride soon gives way, when a young, wounded spirit is in question.

## CHAPTER LII.

"This is punishment beyond  
A mother's sin, to take him from me." BYRON.

Day by day Sybil's state of mind became worse, so that it grew impossible for Mary and I to keep, concealed to ourselves, the secret of her unhappiness. We could see by the distressed, inquiring looks of Mr. Lennard, that his misgivings were excited, but his bodily weakness was so excessive, that it seemed as if he had no power, no energy, in his broken spirit, to enquire for fresh misfortunes.

But a new turn was given to this state of things, by a letter received by Sybil from young Mordaunt himself, who had thus broken through his father's peremptory commands—before leaving England for the Continent—in order to give vent in some degree to his feelings of unalterable love and present misery.

This passionate effusion ignited once more the fire depressed in her first utter despair, and all now was soon known to the father.

With feeble steps and gasping breath, he sought her apartment, and found his child under the influence of the excited agony, into which the letter had cast her—imploping me to go and see Lady Mordaunt, to ascertain whether there still remained for her *any* hope—to entreat that she might be allowed to see William once more before he left the country.

"But, Sybil—my darling girl!" said the sweet, faint voice of the father, as he turned a look of touching distress upon her, "my poor child what is all this?"

She threw herself into his arms, crying,

"Father—dear father—will you help me—will you save me from this horrible misery?"

"What can I do for you, dearest?—what is this great misfortune, causing the grief which I have long remarked; though your poor father has become so weak, Sybil, that he has had scarcely courage to have his heart wounded afresh, by inquiring into your troubles—But what is it, my child?"

"My mother—my mother!" was all that the fearfully agitated girl could say in her agony.

Mr. Lennard's face became pale as ashes. He was silent for a moment, then sank upon a seat, and, in a tone of bitter anguish, murmured:—

"What new misery has that unfortunate being brought upon us, my poor girl?"

"Disgrace!—reproach!—a wound in my heart, father, which will never heal!" cried Sybil, with vehemence, her eyes fixed wildly on her father's face.

"Sybil, my child, be calm—explain yourself," Mr. Lennard, in much agitation, exclaimed.

"Well father, you shall hear all," cried Sybil; "and then—if you ever loved, you will

not wonder that I am nearly mad—that my heart is on fire, not only with love, but with hatred. Yes, *hatred*, Father! Can you, who have suffered so sorely, marvel that hatred should fill my soul, which is not like an angel's—such as yours! that I should hate one who has been the bane of my young heart's happiness—has bowed down my head with shame, even from my very childhood—has destroyed your precious health—broken your heart! You cannot wonder that this last stroke—the tearing asunder of my heart's affections, should have finished the work. I *hate* her! yes—even though she is my mother! Can you be surprised? Will you cry like Mary—She is your mother.. *your mother?*"

"Yes Sybil! Mary is right," said Mr. Lennard; "*she is your mother*, so may God forgive me, if my bruised heart for a moment encouraged you in such a declaration! Mary is right, as she always is. And therefore," he continued, in a tone of gentle rebuke, "you must not speak to me of hating her."

"Oh! father," she passionately exclaimed, "how can I help it? I am not like Mary—and she, it seems, has been saved by a merciful Providence from all those circumstances, which have fallen upon me with such bitter violence. My sister bears not *her* very name—that name which must recal *her* to the thoughts of those who hear it, or repeat it—Mary carries not her dread likeness, stamped on her every feature—which causes even you, my dear father, at times to shudder, when your eyes fall upon me—and with all she has been created in mind and temper of such, as none would dare—more than of an angel's—to image evil. I verily believe, that had Mary stood in my place.. had William Mordaunt loved her instead of my miserable self, Sir William's prejudices would have melted away, and his power of upholding them have vanished. But no; *Sybil* Lennard! on whom he knows too well not an eye could rest, but the image of guilt and disgrace would rise up before the remembrance!"

It needed little more, to explain to the father, the sad history of poor Sybil's disappointment, and of sympathy she had enough, if it were only the commiseration, expressed in the deep distress, which her recital left upon his countenance.

Poor Sybil! Grief makes us very selfish. Forgetful of all others in the absorbing sorrow which possessed her heart, and catching at a faint hope, by witnessing the sincere sympathy of her father, she again renewed her entreaties, that some communication should take place between her friends and the parents of her lover.

Did not William say in his letter, that he could not but believe, that her father..so almost venerated by his parents, might be able by his influence to soften Sir William's prejudices?

Mr. Lennard firmly, but sadly, shook his head.

"Dear Sybil," he said, a flush passing over his pale face, "I could do almost anything—make any sacrifice for you. But it is hardly possible, dearest," he continued, in an agitated,

distressed tone—"it would be too humiliating—both to you, my child, and to your father, to act in a manner, which might thus seem to compromise our dignity and proper consideration for ourselves. I cannot plead for my Sybil's entrance into any family," he added, with a smile of gentle—mournful pride.

However to cut short all these sad passages, I must at once briefly state, that the energy of Sybil's supplications, finally prevailed in part; for she at length obtained leave that I should visit the Mordaunts, and with them talk over the subject, perfectly independent of Mr. Lennard's voice or name in the matter.

And all this time I had not seen nor heard, more of the ill-fated being, whose apparition on the cliff, had indeed proved as the presage of the succeeding storm.

Often had I striven to manage an ascent to the brow of the hill, to gain the cottage there situated. . . not far from the spot of our last unexpected meeting. . . and which I had discovered was the abode of *Mrs. Hughes*. But I found it so difficult—so impossible without the chance of discovery to escape from the overruling cares and distress of that period, that no communication, save by letter, took place between me and the recluse. I excused my absence on the plea of Sybil's illness, and also my own indisposition, which was in truth no subterfuge, so much was I suffering from my harassed mind.

She wrote evidently reckless. . . hopeless! she said,

"It was enough for her to gaze from her solitary nest on the house which she felt contained her children. . . *her husband!* . . . to watch the flickering light of the chamber where they sat every evening, to see light after light extinguished by degrees, and then picture to herself the peaceful—innocent slumbers, to which they had yielded themselves! Joy too great for one like her—that the morning dawn should reveal to her longing eyes, the same habitation—to fancy as she ventured to approach close to it, that she discerned their flitting forms—day after day to live on the hope that they might again appear before her, as on the evening, when her kind Felicie had suffered their miserable mother to gaze on them so near."

And thus I departed on my journey to London.

My mission proved most sadly unsuccessful in its object.

I will not enter minutely into the details of all that occurred. Suffice it, that I arrived in Portland Place, just as young Mordaunt was on the eve of starting for the Continent, having failed in all his endeavors to remove his father's prejudices. My appearance placed the subject on a new, but equally unpleasant footing.

Sir William, already irritated by his son's importunity—backed as it also was, by Lady Mordaunt's urgent solicitations—was—like most persons of his character—determined and obstinate in every decree and opinion when once formed and set forth. Still he was not inaccessible to touches of feeling and kindness.

Provoked in himself to find his firmness yield-

ing—his sternness softening, from all that I had to bring forward, concerning the state of poor Sybil's affections, he was goaded on to make one of those hasty and conclusive decisions—more fatal to the happy termination of the affair, than persisting in his former sentence of the subject.

"His son was of age," he said, "and of course—legally—at liberty to wed whom he pleased. But if, with the perfect knowledge of his father's scruples, he acted contrary to them, his will should be altered in favor of his younger son; there being nothing save the title, which was not under his own disposal. This, though fortune might not be an object with so rich a wife, would at least mark his entire disapprobation of the marriage."

And then Sir William left Town to escape further solicitation.

Lady Mordaunt was powerless to assist us, and the son had been brought up under too strict a sense of subjugation to paternal authority, even to contemplate any longer, so decided an act of disobedient defiance, as a forbidden marriage must necessarily be.

I was confined to my bed by the agitated, harassed state of my mind and body, and I learnt that there had been dispatched to poor Sybil, a letter of passionate—despairing farewell—and that William had taken leave of his mother to sail for France.

Poor Lady Mordaunt's distress of mind was great, and still more was it increased, when she learnt my sad foreboding account of Mr. Lennard's state of bodily health.

It may be imagined that I delayed no longer than was necessary returning to Sidmouth.

### CHAPTER LIII.

"Break, break, break,  
At the foot of thy crags, O sea!  
But the tender grace of a day that is dead,  
Will never come back to me."—TENNYSON.

"The brand is on thy brow,  
Yet I must shade the spot,  
For who will love thee now,  
If I love thee not?"—BARRY CORNWALL.

THE afternoon of the day on which the last letter from William Mordaunt had reached them, the graceful figures of the sisters might have been seen ascending that same hill, to whose summit they had rambled, the evening of the fatal receipt of the first communication.

But another form dogged their steps from a distance. She who dwelt in the lonely cottage on the hill—she followed the two sisters till they had attained the height of the ascent, on one side of which lay a broad healthy common, on the other, the wild crags overlooking the sea.

The girls turned from the pathway, and bent their steps towards the edge of the cliff, and gradually the Mother—for she it was—approached nearly to the spot on which they had paused.

It was a gloomy autumn afternoon. A gale was rising, and the seabirds were scaring over their heads, or skimming across the ocean, which lay so far beneath, that the heaving of its dark waves was scarcely perceptible to those who looked down upon it—but seemed to rest below,



mute and motionless, like a mighty sheet of molten lead.

Of this wild, dreary scene, these two fair creatures now formed a part. And well did the gloomy aspect of all around accord with the feelings of one—poor Sybil!—who stood close to the precipice's brink—her veil flying back like a pennon in the gale—her long dark tresses streaming round her face—her arms, in her unconstrained abandonment, stretched wildly aloft; whilst with her tall form thrown back, she gave vent in thrilling accents to the paroxysms of woe bursting from her wounded heart.

A forsaken Ariadne might she well have personified!

And there by her side, had sunk her sister, in weary exhaustion and dejection—lifting her sweet, pale face upwards, with such sad pity, and between each dreary pause of her companion's grievous outpourings, raising her "soul subduing voice" in gentle tenderness; soon however, overpowered by the impatient interruption of her, she would so gladly soothe.

And the third person, who stood apart, drinking in each sound, heard once more those other tones.

But stern as storms are "when they  
Scare the sea,"

breathing words, which turned her heart colder than the wave-washed rocks around her—for those words spoke forth with thrilling emphasis, a tale of wrong—of wretchedness—distraction—misery—and despair.

What sounds to issue from so young a breast!

They startled even her, from whose remorse-stricken bosom, she thought alone could have been wrung, such depth and length of anguish. Like a statue of stone that unhappy listener stood, till Mary, with a sudden cry of fear, stretched forth her hands to seize her sister's dress; for the girl in her excited agitation had approached so close to the border of the Cliff, that—one step more, and she must have been hurled from the height. And the mother too uttered a cry, and stoed in an instant with a look of startled terror by her daughter's side.

For a moment a feeling of fear seemed to absorb every other, in the hearts of both the girls, at this sudden apparition of the being, who in their last interview, had left the impression on their minds that she was mad; and whose wild look now was not calculated to re-assure them. But when, recovered from her first impulse of alarm, she said in the calm tone and voice, which to the reckless, woe-stricken soul, it soon becomes so easy to acquire,

"Forgive me—but your position, young lady!" and she glanced at Sybil, "was so very frightful to behold!"

Their fear therefore seemed to subside, and Mary faintly smiled her gratitude for the stranger's sympathy in her alarm; whilst Sybil, with the carelessness of a mind, absorbed and pre-occupied, sank down on the seat, from which her sister had risen, fixing her eyes on the scene beneath, as if unconscious or heedless of the intruder's presence. Mary too again placed herself by her sister's side, who now murmured in a hoarse, complaining voice,

"Mary—why—why did you not let me die?"

Why not let me fling myself from this giddy height, and put an end to my misery?"

"Dear Sybil! have you no thought but for the indulgence of your present selfish feelings?" was Mary's mild, reproachful reply.

"Yes, Mary," Sybil answered impetuously, "you know I have not alone my own deep, galling wound which is now maddening my heart, to bear. Oh sister, the blight which has fallen on each and all of us! Our murdered Bertie—our dying, broken-hearted father!—your own patient sorrow, Mary!—What—what is the sin that has marked us all, above others on earth, as objects of God's heavy wrath!—What—what is the sin!—Oh, Mary, can I have forgotten?"

Attracted by a groan uttered by another by her side, she suddenly raised her eyes, and saw the tall lady standing listening gaspingly to her words.

"Hush—hush, dear Sybil!" whispered Mary, who also perceived their strange auditor.

"Well! what does it signify?" persisted Sybil; "what matters it if all the world hears this, of which all the world is but too well aware. Doubtless, Madam," she continued, in a tone of withering bitterness, "even to you our story is well known?"

"Too—too well known!" was the low, earnest answer, in a tone which might have been taken for commiseration.

As if encouraged by the corroboration of her assertion afforded by this reply, and attracted by the sympathy of fellow suffering, so plainly written on that stranger's face, Sybil again burst forth. Springing to her feet she exclaimed,

"Well lady! the woman that has caused all this misery is *our mother*! In those words, you may read our blood-stained history. But no, you *cannot*," she continued, spurred on still farther by perceiving the quivering torture, speaking, as she thought, of the deep compassion the stranger felt her woe deserved, "you cannot read it all, for you have not seen all the victims of that blighting history. You only see us—I, who you may perhaps think frantic—and she," and Sybil pointed to Mary, "who by some strange power, supports her trial with a spirit more than mortal. You have not," and now from the girl's eyes there gushed showers of burning tears, and her voice sank to a tone of soft but deep agony—"you have not seen *our Father* whose heart has long been broken, and who now is fading before our eyes—nor have you looked upon our brother—our bright—our beautiful brother, whom *her* sin struck to the earth. And now—now he is in the dark—cold grave—"

"Oh God!—oh God! spare me!" cried the wretched woman, wildly clasping her hands, and lifting her bursting eye-balls to the skies.

Poor Mary in great distress endeavored to allay her sister's fierce excitement, to interrupt her in this unguarded exposure of her own feelings, and the sad and sacred annals of their domestic calamities. And now in the dreary pause which followed, she interposed her voice... thrilling in the first trembling agitation—in its clear gentle tones of reproach—like that of an angel, rebuking the heaven-accusing—passionate mortal's rebellious tongue.

"Sybil! all this to a stranger!" she exclaimed; "our griefs should at least be sacred to our own hearts... to each other's ears. Madam, you must excuse my sister. Her strong feelings are excited now, beyond control, by the misery of a bitter disappointment. And," she added, in a faltering tone—"and also from the anticipation of a great sorrow which is hanging over our heads."

Mary, as she uttered these words, fixed her eyes upon the person to whom they were addressed, and could not fail to be struck by the violent indications of agitation visible in her countenance. But there was also something which strangely affected the young girl's inward soul, in the look and tones with which the stranger suddenly gasped forth...

"And you—you, Mary! do you too hate your wretched mother!"

"Oh no... oh no!" Mary replied with much emotion.

"But you cannot love her!"

And the speaker softened and calmed her voice, from its harsh, misery-jarring notes, as one might do in speaking to some gentle child.

"You, so innocent and pure," she continued, "you *cannot* love the memory of one so guilty!"

Mary wept.

"My mother was not always so," she murmured, for in her turn she seemed to be drawn irresistibly to speak forth to the stranger the feelings of her heart. "She was not always so. Oh no! she was once as good—as virtuous—as worthy of being loved, as ever mother was."

"But she became vile by her guilt," proceeded the stranger, "and this has worked all the woe, of which your sister spoke. And now you, so good... so spotless in thought, word and deed, must shrink in holy dread, and hatred, from a creature so stained—so abhorrent! You must loathe the remembrance of one, who has become the scourge of all those you love so dearly!"

A touching expression of distress at these words, passed over that daughter's face—as she heard the love so tenaciously—so indissolubly cherished in her young heart, thus sternly assailed. For a moment, all the enduring strength—the long suffering of her great charity, sank faint and abashed within her breast, with no tongue—no spirit to uphold its cause. And again that—miserable—self-accused being, groaned beneath that silent—unwillingly acceded condemnation, which with such infatuated persistence, she had drawn forth from that gentle and merciful judge; and which, like the precious balm of the righteous, smote with more agony on her heart, than even the fierce denunciations of that child, who now exhausted and overwhelmed, leant with her head against the hard rock—her eyes fixed in wondering bewilderment on the scene, in which she had ceased to take an active part.

But it was only for one moment that Mary sat in silence and dejection. The next—her weeping eyes cast down—she murmured, while the stranger bent eagerly forward to catch her trembling accents: "I know that my mother sinned; but I also know that she is repentant—oh, so repentant—so suffering! And if the spotless Saviour would not accuse the sorrow-

ing sinner, is there one on earth so pure and holy, who may dare to do so? And I, Madam, am *her child*, and I cannot tutor my heart to forget, the dear, gentle mother of my infancy. I cannot image her but as such. And so it was with my darling brother. How often have we together in secret talked of her... prayed for her! She had at least *two* children, whose fondest dream was to meet her in that Heaven where all, cleansed from sin, will be reunited in the bonds of perfect love. One is there already—gone to await his poor, repentant mother—he, sweet angel! taken early from the sorrows and wounds of earth, which his tender heart was ill-fitted to endure. And I am left... her other child... to suffer patiently, if permitted to do naught else: perhaps some day to help and comfort this unfortunate mother: no one can forbid a daughter that privilege."

"Mary... my blessed, angel Mary! do more. For one moment let your mother lie at your feet, and shield and hide her from the bitter scorn, and fierce hatred of her other child; for her heart can bear no more."

And with a convulsive sob, as if that heart were indeed bursting, and her tall form quivering with strong emotion, she sank by the pale girl's side.

Sybil, with a shriek, rushed towards her sister.

"Our mother! did she say she was our mother!"

"Yes... your mother, Sybil!" the prostrate suppliant gasped, clinging still nearer to Mary's knees, like one pleading in strong agony for life.

"Crush me not, Sybil; crush not my bleeding heart and I will go!" the wretched woman cried. "Oh, look not on me thus!"

For with startled terror, rather than any other feeling the astonished girl was gazing upon as if the earth had yawned before her, and given forth the dead. She was aroused by her mother hastily springing to her feet, with the fearful cry of "Mary... my sweet child!" for she felt that gentle creature lying fainting in her grasp. Mary—the enduring Mary had given way at last from the shock of these strange and overpowering emotions. Sybil and her mother were soon kneeling together, absorbed in the common care of tending and supporting that fair drooping form. They raised their voices together to pour tender encouragement into her ear; they took each a hand in theirs; each called her their sweet, their beloved Mary, till she smiled faintly on them, and made an effort to rise from the ground on which she sat; for she began to feel better.

At this juncture a fourth person made her appearance amongst them.

It was Agatha. She had come in search of her mistress with preservatives against the storm which was rapidly rising.

The sound of carriage wheels were at the same time heard slowly rumbling up the hill, and in another moment, Mr. St. John and a servant made their appearance.

How those three re-united beings parted, no one of them perhaps could have told.

In a sort of dreamy state, to which the con-



fusing violence of the outward storm added more bewilderment, Mary and Sybil found themselves hurried away by Mr. St. John towards the carriage awaiting them—he, in his anxiety on their account, scarce even perceiving that there were others exposed to the tempest, and the party had nearly descended the hill ere the young man observed any new feature of emotion in his two companions, save that which might have proceeded from alarm occasioned by the storm. But gradually, as they sat opposite to him, he remarked Sybil leaning back, motionless as stone—an air of almost stupefaction prevailing her countenance—her lips parted—her eyes distended as if some strange event had suddenly arrested the flame of passion—even of pain in her breast.

But, Mary—the gentle, composed Mary was trembling with some strong and violent agitation. She clasped her hands—sat upright, and wept like a child, and then laid her head against the side of the carriage, as if some intolerable yet irrepressible anguish was tearing her gentle heart.

Mr. St. John was thunderstruck. Mary had set out on her walk in such calm and patient sadness—how could her spirit have been so broken, so disturbed?

"Miss Lennard, dearest Miss Lennard!" he exclaimed, "you have exerted yourself too much of late... you have overtaxed your strength... Have you been alarmed by anything?... what is the cause of all this?" He glanced with anxious enquiry to Sybil for an explanation; but she only opened her eyes more wildly, looked with bewilderment upon her sister and made no answer.

"My poor mother!" was at last distinguished from the murmurings of Mary's lips.

Far from divining the immediate cause of this explanation of the emotion to which it seemed to form the key, the words appeared not to disconcert Mr. St. John; on the contrary, he bent forward, gently took the hand of the agitated girl, and murmured in a soothing, though somewhat embarrassed tone:

"Is there anything I can do to serve you on that subject?"

"On my mother's behalf?" she gasped.

"For any one in the world you can name, Miss Lennard;" was the earnest answer.

"Ah, Mr. St. John, will you be her friend? She is so friendless—so miserable—so utterly forsaken, and so changed by grief and suffering—Mr. St. John, I talked to her—I gazed at her, and I knew not it was the same bright and beautiful mother whom I worshipped as a child. That voice which I have ever heard ringing in my ears since we parted—not even did my heart tell me it was hers."

"You have seen your mother?" Mr. St. John exclaimed in astonishment.

"Yes!" Mary faltered, burying her face in her hands; and the remainder of the drive was passed in silence. Mary's hand passively, and doubtless, unconsciously remaining in the gentle pressure of Mr. St. John's.

## CHAPTER LIV.

She is unfortunate; indeed distract;  
Her moods will needs be pitied. SHAKESPEARE.

WITH nervous dread I had anticipated my return to Sidmouth. At that moment Sybil formed the chief, indeed absorbing, object of my anxiety. But arrived, I found a change—a sad, striking change!—which threw into the shade all other influences.

Since my departure, Mr. Lennard had been sinking with alarming rapidity—too plainly evident, from the alteration which struck me, as having taken place in his whole appearance, when my eyes first fell upon him, as he sat propped up by pillows, unable to rise to greet me. So spiritually fragile seemed his frame—so dazzling the unnatural brilliancy of his large blue eyes, and the delicate flush upon his heavenly countenance! he looked, indeed, an unfit inhabitant for this mortal earth.

Sybil met me with dark, tearless composure. Mary with, as I thought, peculiar emotion. She drew me aside ere I had been many minutes in the house. Standing before me, and clasping her hands, she cried, in thrilling accents of emotion—

"Felicie, I have seen my mother!"

"Mary!" I exclaimed, in astonishment.

"Yes, I have seen her!" and she burst into tears.

This was all that had passed between us on the subject, when the door opened, and Mr. St. John entered, whom I had not yet seen. Mary, to my surprise, sprang forward, and seizing both his hands, fixed her streaming eyes eagerly on the young man's face.

He looked down upon her sweet countenance with an expression of deep tenderness, and said, in a tone most kind, though grave—

"I have seen her, Miss Lennard—and trust I have been of service."

Mr. St. John then turned to me, as if from a painful subject.

Soon after, I was alone with him, listening to the accounts of facts—so affecting to my heart—the meeting and recognition of the daughters and their unfortunate mother.

The young man spoke with sincere feeling of the distressing visit he had just been paying to that poor lady. He told me how—in compliance with Mary's entreaties—he had gone to the cottage on the hill, and there endeavored to pour all the consolation which religion can afford into the heart of that grief-stricken penitent.

"She was too overcome by the agitation of so unexpected a visit," he said, "and alas! it seems by so new an event as a visitor in such a capacity—for I deemed it more prudent to appear before her as one sent by a friend in my spiritual office alone)—for me to effect much comfort in that one interview; and when by degrees I revealed that I came by desire of her daughter, the emotion of the unhappy mother was too great to be controlled.

"I was scarcely equal to the task of witnessing such a scene—it was too distressing to my feelings to think that the afflicted being was indeed the mother of Miss Lennard. I did, however all in my power to ease her suffering spirit—and I promised to visit her frequently."

It was indeed a solace to my heart, to feel that a friend—such a friend had been provided—one she so much needed—so truly calculated to pour into her soul the oil and wine of spiritual consolation, with so tender and compassionate a hand—one who would lead her to that refuge from which remorse and despair had ever seemed to withhold her bleeding heart.

This meeting with the girls, both Mr. St. John and myself agreed in regretting. It could scarcely fail to be a source of discomfort and pain to both parties.

The mother and daughters once re-united, the separation they must still maintain—would it not be doubly torturing to all their feelings?

I could see that Mr. St. John, notwithstanding all the religious charity of his nature, added to the compassion with which the unhappy Mrs. Fitz Hugh inspired in him—was scarcely less strict in his sentiments as concerned the intercourse between the fallen one and those innocent beings, than Sir William Mordaunt; and that he shrunk from the idea of one, situated as she was, holding any familiar intercourse with her children. That vision of remorse—how injurious would it be to these fair girls—her dark shadow overcasting their paths.

It seemed a strange fatality which had brought that poor outcast to the spot where all those from whom she had been so long divided, were so soon to congregate!

Mr. Devereux, I learnt, was expected immediately, accompanied by his afflicted wife. Her state of mind was not such as to prevent her from understanding the condition of the son-in-law—towards whom the strong affection which, in her days of health and prosperity, was one of the warmest sentiments of her heart—still continued the feeling most sensibly preserved in her diseased mind. And none could wish to prevent the determination she expressed of “seeing her beloved Albert once more before he died.”

And then the startling—the appalling fact—which it seemed but too probable might occur;—that the wretched Sybil had drawn near to watch from afar the last hours of him from whom she had once sworn that “nought but death should part” her. As yet, he knew not that she was so near.

It was with surprise and admiration that I marked the conduct of young Sybil during this period. One might have imagined that every thought and feeling had been dissolved and absorbed by the filial anxiety and devotion which appeared to influence her every action. With strength of mind, fortitude, and self-control—surpassing her sister, Sybil performed her part of tendance and watchfulness. No selfish grief intruded itself upon those duties—and I should have rejoiced at this—had it not been that I began soon to discover something in the too highly wrought tone of her demeanor, which filled me with alarm on the dear girl’s account.

I would have given much to have witnessed some burst of impassioned grief, of impatient outpourings of her feelings—of woe or agony—or even temper. But no, with stern endurance, she never was seen to melt into tears; she never

breathed to me a word on the subject of her unfortunate love, or of my expedition to London; not even of that strange, startling incident which during my absence had befallen her—the strange meeting with her mother. There was a shadow in her large floating eyes—eyes which never wept—a strained composure on her sorrowful, unsmiling face, softened only by the air of tenderness and resignation which passed over it, when it turned towards her father. All these indications would have troubled me even more, had not all thought, all feeling been at that moment so sorrowfully absorbed by him who was passing from us. Sybil seemed also to shrink from any effort to dive into the state of her own mind. Mary and herself scarcely ever left their father’s side.

How well could my heart divine the feelings of the elder daughter—which changed the color on her cheek—when she followed the gaze of her father’s languid eyes, lifted towards that hill opposite the window at which his sofa was always placed—unconscious whose weary eyes looked down in solitary woe upon them. And Mary knew that she might not—could not fall upon his neck and plead for her mother. So they told her. Not even might their children unite those two severed souls for one sad, last embrace of reconciliation.

Mr. and Mrs. Devereux arrived. What a change had been worked in them since first presented to the readers!

I speak not of the age which now whitened the hair and furrowed the brow. No, the hoary head which crowned Mr. Devereux’ righteous days, was “indeed the wise man’s crown of glory,” yes glory, his days might still be called, though a daughter’s shame had bowed the head before its time, and bent his noble spirit.

He who had afflicted him, had still suffered the virtuous man to remain an object of esteem, respect, and love to all around him. But she alas! whose heart was too proudly secure in her own strength and wisdom—on her had that blow fallen with the most conspicuous, appalling force. Her mind, too stern to bend, was broken beneath the violence of the shock which had cast her crown—the crown on which she had so long fixed her hopes so high—down to the ground for ever; and covered her future life with dishonor.

A house had been taken for Mr. and Mrs. Devereux not far from the one we inhabited; and the former passed most of his time with us. After the first visit, Mrs. Devereux was kept as much as possible from the presence of the invalid, for in the brief space that she spent by his side, the poor creature had agonized every nerve of his unhealed heart, causing every wound to bleed afresh.

She talked of his boy—of *Bertie*—as if alive—she tortured the miserable father, and all those who heard her by enquiring for that loved one, and talking of his beauty—by even repeating little speeches she remembered, which he had spoken in his infancy, for the poor father’s amusement—or slight traits of the boy, which had left an impression on her mind. Strange to say, through all the progress of her mental disease—from the time when she uttered the



stern enquiry, "Where is my daughter?" there had ceased to flow from her lips any allusion to that individual.

Some dead weight seemed to have fallen upon the name once so firmly written on her heart and crushed its very impression; or, on the contrary, a burning remembrance might have been retained above the wreck of other memories, with a truth which banished the subject from her lips, as the thing of guilt and shame she might not utter.

But the fact of her grandson's death was not so to be impressed upon her perception. The poor girls, as well as their father, shrunk from the presence of her who was for ever startling their ears by the sound of that name—that sanctified name, uttered in her harsh accents of querulous, careless, sometimes, ludicrous enquiries and comments. The poor lady's day was passed in driving about the country with the nurse, Mrs. Armstrong, who was now her personal attendant. I sometimes accompanied her, but as little as possible allowed her to be with those, whose hearts were so ill able to endure the irritating society of such a companion. I thought it my duty to inform Mr. Devereux of the fact of his daughter's proximity. He was much agitated and affected by the intelligence. The idea that a meeting was now inevitable shook his nerves to a painful degree.

I told him however that Mr. St. John had refrained from imparting to Mrs. Fitz Hugh the arrival of her parents—that she had never as yet ventured into the valley until the shades of evening had obscured the day-light, therefore he would be enabled to act according to his own feelings on the subject without fear of wounding hers. He came therefore to the final determination of preserving all the powers of his mind and strength, for the better comfort of the last days of that beloved son of his adoption—that child of promise, who had never failed him, or crossed his fondest, proudest hopes—the child who when flesh and blood had deserted him, had fastened himself more firmly round his bereaved heart; and till death had snapped those tender ties, he must be his all in all—his more than son or daughter.

I must not linger on this affecting period—how sorrowful and yet how far less agonizing the remembrance than many other portions of these records—to replete I fear with horrors—domestic horrors—to have been rendered *pleasing* to my readers. May one warning have reached the heart—one lesson, and I shall be more than satisfied.

#### CHAPTER LV.

"Tis love, the last best gift of heaven  
Love, gentle, holy, pure;  
But tenderer than a dove's soft eye,  
The searching sun, the open sky  
She never could endure."—KEBLE.

"I might not keep one vigil by his side,  
I, whose wrong heart went with him to the last."  
MRS. HEMANS.

MR. LENNARD never alluded, but very remotely, and then with calm resignation and

gentle dignity, to the subject which concerned his younger daughter.

He spoke with unaltered kindness and affection of the Mordaunts—expressing how happy it would make him to see them once more, particularly his old and dear friend Lady Mordaunt.

Perhaps the apparent resignation of poor Sybil had calmed the father's mind on this point, more than any other circumstance. And for his Mary, that child who had through life, been to him, but a source of peace and sweet consolation—even his last moments were comforted by the happy provision for her days on earth, his eyes were suffered to behold prepared for her—"Mary," he murmured one morning as that daughter sat by his side, his eyes having been fixed for some time before in anxious thought on Sybil's countenance, who had just quitted the room.

"Mary, my darling girl, I have, thank God, no distressing care pressing on my mind on your account."

"Oh no father," she answered with a faint, tremulous smile.

Mr. Lennard looked enquiringly for a moment on her sad, unconscious countenance, and then said with that sweet, almost arch expression of former days,

"Then I am not the first who has spoken to my Mary of her happy prospects—" She still looked unconscious but enquiringly at her father, who with more seriousness continued: "Mary, Llewellyn will be your home, my child—beautiful Llewellyn which I shall never again behold—but it is very sweet to me to think it will have such a mistress. Oakleigh will be one day dear Sybil's—but till then—your home I am sure will still be hers, dear Mary."

"Oh, father! surely none other," murmured Mary; "could you for a moment imagine it could be otherwise?"

"Yes, Mary. Sybil is too young, I think," he said with almost a shudder, "to marry, and that idea has reconciled me to the termination of this late distressing affair with regard to young Mordaunt: and till she does marry, for some day I suppose she must," he added with a sigh, "your husband, dearest," and he pressed her hand with fervor, "the happy protector of an angel, will be the friend and brother she so exactly needs."

"My husband, father!"

Mary, who had been struggling with the emotion her father's words had affected in her heart, in order that she might lose no syllable of his precious wishes concerning their future course, now lifted up her face expressive of wonder, a slight flush suffusing her pale cheeks.

"Forgive me, darling," Mr. Lennard said, reading on that truthful countenance, that it was otherwise than he had imagined, "I fancied, I know not why, that I was as much assured of your sentiments as of those felt by Mr. St. John towards my child."

"Mr. St. John!" was Mary's apostrophe.

We will not seek to read the feelings too pure and tender "for the rash intruding glance" which in that moment put forth their first, sweet,

gentle, shoot in Mary's heart, the moment that name, in so new a light, fell upon her ears. She hid her face in silence on her father's bosom.

"Who ever saw the earliest rose  
First open her sweet breast?  
Or when the summer sun goes down  
The first soft star in Evening's crown  
Light up her gleaming crest."

and sweeter, brighter far than flower or star must have been these first gleams of such a love as that which kindled in the pure breast of Mary Lennard—the first opening of her heart to any more passionate affection save that of parents—brother—sister—friend. She had long felt for Mr. St. John the esteem of a friend—one whose gentleness and kindness had won her confidence above all others, unconnected by relationship—yes, even *her heart*—though she knew it not till this moment—and it was too much for her to bear, when with her whole frame thrilling with the first perception of the mighty truth, her cheeks more brightly crimsoned than they had been for many a sad day—she lifted up her sweet face, and met the dark, anxious eyes of Mr. St. John, who had that moment entered the room.

Mary's hand was within her father's, and he clasped it tenderly, as if to re-assure her; for he saw the confusion of his child.

And Mr. St. John—his color rose also; he looked for a moment almost as abashed, and, as if forgetful of the presence of mind, which at another time would have led him to approach, as if he remarked not any particular sign of emotion, was turning away in embarrassed perplexity, when Mr. Lennard's feeble voice was raised:—

"Mr. St. John, do not go," he exclaimed.

The young man returned and sat down by the side of Mary and her father.

It was impossible to pretend to overlook the trembling, blushing agitation poor Mary vainly endeavored to overcome; the knowledge that it was perceived by him serving only to increase it.

But this emotion was very precious to the young man's heart.

He had adored the sweet Mary before, when she had shone on his path, but as the calm, angelic spirit almost too pure for mortal love—but he loved her—oh, how much more now he beheld her

"A spirit—yet a woman too!"

trembling beneath her beautiful embarrassment—shrinking from the timid, yet hard to be restrained glance of tenderness, such as that which for the first time he now dared to cast upon her.

The next moment, and Mary had, with quick recollection, which seemed to chide her for having even for an instant allowed her devoted thoughts to roam from her father, risen to smooth his pillows, which had become disarranged.

Mr. St. John in assisting her, received from the fair nurse a smile, which, though timid and tearful, was a sunshine to his heart.

Mr. Lennard too noted the smile, and a very happy expression stole over his countenance.

"She has indeed been to me, St. John," he said, "like that daughter of whom the wise man spoke, 'excellent above all'—and the heart of her husband may indeed," he continued, with a smile, but sighing as the words passed his lips, "surely trust in *her*—her children rise up and call her blessed;" and the father gazed fondly on the face of his good child.

But poor Mary burst into tears: Her other hand was in that of Mr. St. John—he looking on her with the tenderest affection.

Young Sybil at this moment glided into the room, with her altered, dreamy air, and her slow, languid step, her eyes quickly lighted up with an air of suspicious surprise, as they fell upon the scene; but the next they were turned away, and a strange, bitter expression played for an instant upon her lips. But her presence was a signal for the little scene to end.

My heart, in the mean while, was sorely riven and perplexed. That soul subduing peace which seemed to be infusing itself into the hearts of the mourners was banished from mine by the groans and cries ever ringing in my ears from the outcast spirit without; for one word of forgiveness from Albert, her lost one—one word which might lay the ghost of agony and remorse, which would otherwise haunt her to the grave.

And the day came for that gentle, sinking man to crave an interview with his friend Felicie.

After having with anxious kindness spoken of my future life—that future for which he had so nobly provided—having commended his daughters to my care—and confided to me his wishes on every subject connected with them, and all others which it came under my province to see fulfilled; he paused, covered his face, and, after some moments of silence, as if to gather courage and strength, he commenced on the subject which I expected, and was prepared to hear.

He spoke of Sybil—of his lost one!—so, in the pitying tone of an angel, he called her—and implored me never to forsake the forlorn one—"And tell her—tell her!"—here his voice failed him.

"That you forgive her?" I faltered.

"That I trust to meet her *there*," he answered, with a heavenly smile—and he pointed upwards.

"Mr. Lennard," I said, in beseeching accents, "if you desire peace to that poor, remorse-stricken, despairing heart—let her hear those precious words from your own lips. She is in this place—gasping in wretchedness and agony for some soul-soothing accents of forgiveness from the lips of him she injured—but, alas! still loves too—too well."

An expression of touching emotion passed over Mr. Lennard's countenance.

"Here, do you say, she is? Sybil, so near!" he gasped; and the distress which convulsed his features, smote my heart—and I almost repented having made the communication. But not so did I feel when I left his presence, bearing with me the precious words—

"Bid her come, if so it is—if she desires it—the pang will be but one more earthly struggle—but if the assurance from my lips of perfect forgiveness, such as I hope to meet with from



the Judge, in whose presence I shall so soon stand—can save her from additional misery—and soothe her spirit—how joyfully will I endure the trial—most welcome, most sweet will it be. My poor—poor Sybil! Felicie, bid her come.”

And with what willing feet I speeded to her, whom I hoped these words would raise from death and darkness. But I found *him* there—her fate—her doom!

He had come to prevent that which his jealous hatred had perhaps anticipated. He had separated them forever. Such was his undying determination.

Not even now should words of affection fall from each other's lips. In no last embrace should their souls again mingle—those souls whom it had been, and still was, the cherished madness of his soul—to sever *for ever* on this earth!

Hardress Fitz Hugh sat with the most heartless composure—sketching, with his masterly hand, the beautiful valley, which lay in all the loveliness of its autumn tints at his feet, when, with my heart dying within me, I descended the hill—leaving his poor victim writhing under the last coil of the galling chain he had wound around her from the day *she fell*.

The stars were one by one paling before the faint yellow light appearing in the eastern sky, when children and friends left the chamber where death had gently sealed the eyes of Albert Lennard; the low, hoarse murmur of the sea breaking on the shore, fell upon our ears; the chill autumn air blew in upon our pale and tear-washed faces from the hall-door, which it struck me not as we passed—stood open.

I was leading the two poor, drooping, fatherless ones away, when Mr. St. John touched my arm, and on his countenance I beheld that expression which made me leave those dear ones and follow him.

He pointed to the open door—and there what did I behold!

The dark figure of a female, half-prostrate, on the cold ground of the verandah.

Mr. Devereux also stood there—his white, uncovered hair blowing in the breeze—with a look of startled horror on his face.

We raised her up. She turned her eyes wildly upon us, and with a convulsive sob, the name of “Albert” broke from her lips.

We led the miserable Sybil to an adjoining room, but in a short time after, she was once more under the protection of her father's roof.

Agatha had been sent for, and she saw during that time, none but myself. She ever, was told—she felt that she was beneath her father's roof. This privilege had been gained for her by the following note, despatched to Mr. Fitz Hugh by Mr. St. John:

“SIR,—

“Mrs. Fitz Hugh is now at her father's house, and it is Mr. Devereux's wish that there for the present his daughter may remain. Her friends trust that now, at least, you can have no object in opposing this desire. Mr. Lennard expired this morning.”

“HENRY ST. JOHN.

“Mr. Devereux requests you will send Mrs. Fitz Hugh's maid to her immediately.”

For all answer to this dispatch—Agatha had arrived. We learnt, however, from her, that Mr. Fitz Hugh had signified his intention of visiting the north of the country, and returning to Sidmonth before he took his final departure for London, from whence he intended to proceed to Ireland, to attend the election which the late dissolution of Parliament rendered general.

And thus Hardress Fitz Hugh, by a strange fatality, was on the spot to see, winding through the peaceful valley, the dark procession, which bore to that haven “where the wicked cease from troubling” his gentle victim.

Who would have imagined that the first germ of jealous hatred towards his youthful rival, when first upon his ear had fallen the astounding intelligence that Albert Lennard was not the brother of his ardent heart's first passion, that these words should have created a devastating feeling, which spread with such fatal power over his soul, to the ruin of so many victims.

The good—the gifted—the loved—the innocent—all blighted, or laid low! whilst he—the violator of all decency—the despiser of all honorable principles—the unblushing advocate of vice, sophistry, and irreligion—was still in the possession of all his heart desired—the power, the triumph of ambitious genius. But I also, like the Psalmist, “have seen the wicked in great prosperity—spreading himself like the green bay-tree;” yet... “he passed away, and lo, he was not... yes, I sought him, but he could not be found.”

I have marked too, “the perfect man and beheld the upright... that the end of that man is peace;” “whilst the transgressors have perished together, the wicked have been rooted out at the last.”

## CHAPTER LVI.

“She  
From brow and bosom slowly drev  
Her streaming curls of deepest brown  
To left and right, and made appear  
Still lighted in a secret shrine  
Her melancholy eyes divine,  
The home of woe without a tear.”

TENNYSON.

DURING the mournful week succeeding the removal of the beloved dead to his place in that long, last home by the side of the beloved child who had gone before him, all hearts were struck anew with fear and dismay on the subject of poor young Sybil.

It was not the violence of her grief—the passionate outpourings of her affection which troubled us on her account—no; in the same tearless, dreary calm, in which she had passed from her father's death-bed, she remained during the period I mentioned, till the increasing depth and intensity of the shadow deepening over her awoke our most painful anxiety. It was not death we feared, but that more terrible thing whose shade seemed already stealing over the young creature's aspect, marked in the expression of those dark, floating eyes—the fixed gloom—or the faint, patient smile which passed over—the sternly beautiful features of Sybil's pale face.

And then the touching look of sadness with which she gazed, as if some spell forbad her to ease her brain and heart by further signs of grief, when she was led to the side of her dead father, in the hope that the touching spectacle of those cold remains might have the power of awakening some more lively emotion.

Sir William and Lady Mordaunt had arrived the day before Mr. Lennard's demise. They had received a farewell pressure of his hand—a smile of gratitude, when they murmured their assurance of being through life the sincerest friends to his daughters. And though nothing else transpired to lead us to suppose any softening of Sir William's mind on the subject of his son's attachment, some secret hope had certainly lightened our minds, from the period when Sir William passed deeply affected from the presence of his departing friend.

But now, the startling condition of the poor girl made it a question to our dismayed hearts, whether these relenting feelings might not have come too late, whether that young, blighted spirit could ever be again restored to its healthful vigor.

The sudden suppression of passion succeeding that violent and agitated outbreak to which she had given way in the awful interview on the cliff with her mother—the vague and suppressed grief working in her mind during her unwearying watching over her father's decline and dying moments, had been too much for her mind and brain.

Sir William was ardently grieved and discomposed to the uttermost by the poor girl's melancholy state. He went to see her with an anxious expression on his countenance—sat by her side—spoke to her—strove by kind and soothing words to restore her to herself—to draw her to answer him, otherwise than by the strange, absent smiles and labored sighs, with which she noticed such advances, as she sat in her white dress, twisting her long dark hair round her fingers.

The evening before he left Sidmouth, accompanied by Mr. Devereux and Mr. St. John on their sad expedition into Wales, he paid poor Sybil another visit. I heard him murmur to her, in a low, soothing voice;

"Sybil, we must have you well again soon. I have written to William to come; you would like to see William, would you not?"

No one, not even Lady Mordaunt, had been told that this had been done.

But even then, after this communication, Sir William only received in reply a more sweetly careless smile; and he turned away with an anxious and distressed air.

On his leaving the room, however, Sybil turned to me with a puzzled and anxious look, and said,

"William, did he say?" and after I had answered,

"Yes, dearest—William Mordaunt—his father has sent for him to see you—you will like that, will you not?"

She fixed her eyes upon my face earnestly for a moment, then turned them slowly away, and relapsed into her former silence.

The family physician, who had come into Devonshire to attend Mr. Lennard in his last illness, still remained to watch the

most sadly interesting case—and it was agreed that we should not think of moving the patient just at present. Dear Mary! she felt her loss most sorely, though her feelings were shown forth with that meek, quiet grief, which ever characterised the unselfish nature of her every emotion.

Her love for her father had for so long been her all in all, that the heart of the tender daughter felt, in the first moment of bereavement, as if no other tie could supply its place, although she received with gentle sweetness the anxious comforter, to whom that beloved departed had consigned her in his last moments.

It was in that light—not in the new position Mr. St. John now stood towards her—that Mary's heart opened to him at this period—and he, with his scrupulous delicacy, forbore intruding in any other character than that she now confirmed upon him. But the evening before his departure for Wales, when he came to bid her farewell, I noted a shade of pain pass over his features, as poor Mary, her heart oppressed by the thoughts of the sad to-morrow; and too full of grief and anxiety for her sister, by whose side she sat—had no heart, no thought, for word, look or smile, such as the young man's heart wanted to receive, and which he deemed he had earned by his patience.

It was *exigent* of him, perhaps, to expect it at such a time; but he was a lover, and lovers are always *exigent*, and have little consideration for time or circumstances. The melancholy departure on the morrow was the signal for agitating scenes beneath the two roofs—those habitations between which my heart was divided.

The miserable Mrs. Fitz Hugh had not till then left the apartment to which she had first been consigned. Mr. Devereux had been too much affected by the first meeting to endure an interview. She had seen no one but myself, indeed we were all too much occupied with anxiety on young Sybil's account to heed much that poor wearied soul, who passed her time in a sort of dreamy stupor, tended by the faithful Agatha—a daughter yet accounted as a stranger beneath her parent's roof!—A widow's agony for the dead, eating into her heart, yet with no right to claim a widow's sympathy or pity; no right even to mourn as such.

There was something confused, unnatural, half horrible, half grateful to her feelings in her position, which seemed almost to have bewildered her senses, for being with her the day she had been apprised that the funeral procession had left us, as she sat dressed by Agatha in her usual habiliments, she looked at me and my deep mourning dress with a strange, puzzled air, and said in a hesitating manner, putting her hand to her heart.

"I should have new mourning—a different dress, I believe."

But when I turned away distressed, and did not answer, with a shudder she seemed restored to recollection. She groaned and continued the mourning which she had worn since little Mara's death.

Of a still more affecting scene was I that same evening a witness.

Young Sybil had been all that day ill in body



as well as mind. She had complained of an aching pain in her head, causing light to be insufferable to her, nor could she raise her head from the pillow.

At dusk I rose from her bedside, where Mary and I had been seated, and spoke a few words to that dear girl, at which she clasped her hands in tearful agitation.

I embraced her and left the house to keep an appointment I had made with her mother—yes, I had promised that poor soul to bring her to see her daughters. I had no heart to resist her humble supplications that *now* she might be for one half hour with them. Her Mary would not disdain her mother—and by the side of the other poor sufferer, she might be permitted to sit unknown—or at least unheeded.

But I almost hoped that so it might not be, but that some sensible emotion might perhaps have been called forth on the occasion in the mind of young Sybil.

I felt that I might have been blamed for what I was doing. I dared not even consult Lady Mordaunt on the subject, lest her caution—I could answer for her heart—should oppose the meeting of the mother and daughters,

Through the dusky light of the evening, acting on the impulse of my feelings, I put to defiance all but the calls of nature, and led the poor mother to her fatherless children.

I saw the mother draw aside the curtain of her other child's bed, and gaze long and silently upon the sleeping girl, who lay as still and calm at that moment as the beautiful sleeper in the fairy story.

Her long silken hair falling over the snowy pillow, her jetty lashes sweeping a cheek of marble—a very different picture to that afforded by the fierce young Pythoness, who had maddened the gazer's heart on the cliffs, a few weeks before.

"Sit down by her side, mother, and let me be here," and Mary, with meek, sad reverence made her mother seat herself on the chair she had before occupied, and sinking upon a stool by her feet, the daughter once more leant her fair head against that parent's knee—as it had been her wont years ago—and wept in silence.

"I should be at your feet, my child," Mrs. Fitz Hugh murmured. But she could not remove that golden tressed head, which in its gentle pressure smote her heart with sweet and thrilling memories.

"Oh, press my head—it aches—it burns," murmured at length the plaintive voice of young Sybil; and the head was raised upon her mother's bosom; her temples pressed by that cold hand, till the parched lips of the sufferer smiled as if in gratitude to the reliever of her agony; and all that night, and days and nights succeeding, the mother nursed and watched her unconscious child, with the unwearied, ceaseless, exhaustless energy, which however strong may be the affection and will, can never be equalled by any other nurse.

"And who could forbid her," I asked. And Lady Mordaunt agreed, although the thought of Sir William did arise; and the influence that this proceeding might have in strengthening his prejudices. But I thought only of the present.

For a week following, Sybil's illness con-

tinued most alarming. What was it that made the sick girl through all that time instinctively seek her new attendant, and reclining in her arms there seem to feel more relief, than when her form was raised, or her throbbing temples pressed by any other hand. A softer expression overshadowed her features when that attendant administered to her wants, or soothingly murmured her love and encouragement.

"What is it, my Sybil?" that voice one night enquired in its deep but tender tones, as the sick girl awoke from a restless sleep, and sat up and gazed around with wildness.

"William," she murmured, with a faint smile. "William," she again repeated, as if addressing him. "You and I were to tread down the dark world beneath our feet... and yet you will not come... they are all pressing on my head and heart... and I all alone to bear it!"

"You are not alone, dearest, *your mother* is with you."

It was the first time she had spoken this word before that daughter; but all fear and dread was melting beneath the all succumbing tenderness of such communion with her long alienated child.

The word, "*Mother!*" seemed to awake new association in that child's shrouded mind. She talked of the cliffs, and the dark sea beneath, and cried that her mother was pushing her into the deep abyss, calling to William to save her—then murmured that his cruel father was holding him back—that she was falling—till at length she sank again in her mother's arms and lay there till morning dawned.

And with it came the glimmering of recovered light in those darkened orbs—for that night, as the physician had predicted, was the crisis of the malady, from which point he trusted, if the change was favorable, a sure, though slow recovery might be anticipated.

So satisfied was he with the symptoms that succeeded—for though weak in body, the countenance of young Sybil was resuming its natural expression, that the doctor ordered her to be taken out to try the effect of exercise and air in a wheeled chair.

## CHAPTER LVII.

"Hateful—Horrible!

And dost thou cling around me, cursed fiend,  
To drag me to perdition!"—HEBER.

INTO the fresh air of a bright October morning, we set out the following day, and the devoted, self-constituted nurse, absorbed in her new anxiety, forgot all, and followed us.

Reader, have you ever been on the sea-side walk at Sidmouth, on such a morning—the red marble cliff laved by a sea of brightest blue! I can never forget the beauty of the scene. We had paused to gaze upon all around; every object appearing so far more lovely, from our long confinement to the darkness of a sick-room. Mary, with the sad, tremulous smile, ever seeing ready to melt into tears.

Sybil—young Sybil, I mean—(the other saw naught, save the occupant of the chair close to which she stood;) but the young girl, "her me-

lancholy eyes divine," wandering over the fair sea prospect with that patient look of care which gave such a new and touching expression to her countenance. Nothing could be more interesting than the appearance of both sisters, to which their deep mourning gave additional power.

And he thought so doubtlessly... that man, who I saw standing on the beach before us... and no wonder, for he was an artist, and one whose chief passion was beauty... beauty, strange to say, in its most refined and delicate forms.

But I felt more terrified when my eyes recognized the hated form of Fitz Hugh... and saw, I might almost say, the glare from beneath those dark, shaggy eye-brows, falling upon the sweet and unprotected girls, than if it had been a tiger or a rattle-snake that I suddenly beheld; and I uttered an exclamation of horror, seizing at the same time a hand of both, as if to guard them from danger. Their wretched mother beheld her husband! Her arms dropped to her side, and she stood as if she were turned to stone.

Before I had breath to bid the chairman to proceed, Fitz Hugh had advanced, and was by our side.

"Good morning, Mrs. Fitz Hugh," he said, his eye in the mean time turned from her upon the girls with observing scrutiny; "I am in luck, for I was just coming to hear your commands. This is a sweet spot—but we must not indulge in sweets too long; I have been waiting patiently, like a sparrow on the house top, in your nest up, there, till I am weary and"—

"I will come," his wretched wife murmured, in a hoarse tone, and with trembling agitation. She was about to walk away, in an agony of haste, to rid us of this insolent intruder—but Mary, seizing her hand, gasped in a tone of pleading horror,

"Oh, mother!—mother!—do not go with him," and, pale as death, she shrunk back, gazing in affright, and drawing away her mother.

Hardress Fitz Hugh, whose eyes had been principally engaged in feasting, with odious attention, on the beautiful subject in the chair—now turned them on Mary, whose countenance and present action seemed to strike him with a sudden remembrance—and with a disgusting smile of admiration and irony flashing on his countenance, he exclaimed—

"Faith! and this is the pretty Magdalene of the Museum—do you recollect that old story, Mrs. Fitz Hugh? But, on my conscience, this time I have done nothing to deserve such treatment."

"Nothing!" Just heavens! The destroyer of her mother! Done nothing to deserve the loathing, shrinking horror of the innocent creature.

It was well that for the present the perception of her sister was shrouded from fully understanding the scene. I am sure, in her weak state, it would have killed her—that passionately, sensitive being, who now only sat with her large eyes distended, gazing on the strange-looking man, and the emotion of her sister, with a bewildered and somewhat frightened air. I had soon recovered myself, and ordered the chairman to draw Miss Lennard home; then taking

Mary's hand, bade her accompany me. "Leave your mother, dearest," I said, "she will follow us."

And the mother disengaged her hand, which was clasped in Mary's, with a gesture of desperation, and waving it as if to hasten our departure, I led away the weeping girl.

"Oh, Felicie, save her—save her—can you not save her from him?"

"No, Mary, I cannot—for he is her husband," I said hastily, and almost with asperity; for I felt outraged by the presence of the man and despairing, and hopeless, for the unhappy cause of this dreadful scene. Now, indeed, I saw that he with whom she was united was truly a complete bar to familiar intercourse, such as I had authorised between the mother and daughters. What would their friends say to my having made them liable to such pollution as his very approach.

And the poor creature felt this too in its fullest extent, for on her return from this interview with her husband, she did not dare again to enter our abode, but sent to crave an audience with me at her mother's house, where, to my relief on her account, I learnt she had been suffered to return.

"Yes, Hardress Fitz Hugh had well nigh done with his victim. The excitement and malicious pertinacity, which he had maintained to the last with such demoniacal tenacity, had died with his rival. It became evident that no other wish for her society survived the extinction of jealousy. And Sybil saw this in its fullest force when, with cold disgust, his beauty loving eyes, just turned from the youthful loveliness on which they had gazed, and on which sadness only enhanced the poetry of their charms—fell upon that shattered, storm-beaten wreck before him—a speaking witness of the Psalmists' declaration.

"When thou with rebukes dost chasten man for sin, thou makest his beauty to consume away as it were a moth fretting a garment."

The woman who now claimed his disgusted attention was a wreck in its truest application—not the still fair, but faded relic of past beauty to which that term is generally poetically ascribed, but to his fastidious eye as much a ruin in true matter of fact application, as the shattered and blackened mass, from which all beauty has vanished, is from the pleasant and stately vessel which once sailed proudly upon the ocean.

She need not have feared objection to the position which in that interview Sybil laid before her husband—that he would await her father's return, and if the supplication was favorably received she intended to offer up to him, Fitz Hugh would accede to a final and legal separation taking place between them, in exchange for his accepting the whole of the pecuniary allowance which had been hitherto hers—she would not retain one single shilling of it.

Yes, and the man was willing to barter for gold, his claim over a possession so valueless, and with this understanding they had parted—ne consenting to remain at Sidmouth till the return of Mr. Devereux, for the completion of an arrangement which at this moment was particularly acceptable to him—His habits of self in



indulgence and luxury, had plunged him into money difficulties, and the expense of a contested election stared him in the face. But I will not dwell on a subject in every sense so repulsive—when fairer and brighter topics press on my consideration.

#### CHAPTER LVIII.

"Haunts of my earlier years,  
Amid your sighing woods oh! give me rest,  
Unnoticed be the tears,  
Unknown the grief that fills this aching breast,  
While sheltered in your bowers,  
With patient heart I wait the suffering hours."

WE were uncertain whether the arrival of the gentlemen from Wales would take place that night or the following day, but were not surprised when a carriage drove rapidly to the door, followed by an impatient peal at the hall bell—Lady Mordaunt was with us. Sybil reposing languidly on the sofa in her white wrapper, in the same dreamy, passive state in which she had so long continued.

We all but the sick girl arose, as hasty steps were heard ascending the stairs.

"They might be Mr. St. John's!" we exclaimed, but Mary shook her head and said "No."

Nor were they those of Mr. Devereux, or Sir William Mordaunt.

We all felt our hearts beating with vague suspicions. Sybil slowly raising herself from her recumbent posture, bent forward and listened intently.

The door opened, and the tall, noble figure of a young man stood before us—his handsome face glowing with impetuous ardor, mingled with a slight shade of grave anxiety. He cast his eyes over the party assembled, and in the next moment was in the arms of his mother, who, with an exclamation of astonishment, sprang forward to meet him.

"William!" echoed another voice, with a thrilling cry, and Sybil was on her feet, her arms stretched out, and the next instant her slight form was pressed to the young soldier's heart, in silent, mute ecstasy.

"Dear William, this sudden apparition of your's is very imprudent," said Lady Mordaunt; "Sybil has been ill—very ill!"

Young Mordaunt held her from him, and gazed upon Sybil's face—but her cheeks were flushed, and her eyes flashing wildly with the delight which had shot through her frame—and William only thought she looked more divinely beautiful, though he placed her upon the sofa, and said with gentleness,

"Has she been so very ill?"

Sybil smiled, and putting her hand to her head, said,

"I am better now, William!" and burst into tears—those relieving tears, for which through her illness I had often prayed in agony, seemed to melt away the cloud from her heart and brain. Her lover's feeling, sympathising words, seemed to bring her to a clear and true perception of her real circumstances, and brought, with the increase of tears she shed upon his bosom, a subdued but natural state of feeling. And as they sat together, so young and beautiful, and fond—I thought the heart

must indeed be adamant to have separated them from one another.

"But William, tell me, is it with your father's consent that we see you here," said Lady Mordaunt as her son followed with his eyes the retreating, white robed figure, when we finally succeeded in drawing her away in order that she might rest.

The young man then informed his mother of Sir William's letter which had merely mentioned Mr. Lennard's death, and stating his wish that he should meet him at Sidmouth by a certain day, mentioning the following to the one which now found him with us, and which his impatience had anticipated. Finding, on asking at the hotel, that Sir William had not yet returned, and that his mother was at—House, he had there flown on the wings of love, taking it for granted that his summons could only be the signal of his father's consent to his happiness.

When therefore on the following day Sir William arrived, and entered our house, the first object he beheld was Sybil, pale, but sadly beautiful, seated with her hand clasped within that of his son, who soon was pouring into his father's ear expressions of gratitude and happiness. Sybil, in her deep mourning, stood at his side, her large, eloquent eyes fixed so earnestly on his face, that Sir William gave a deep sigh to his former prejudices, and sacrificed them on the shrine of compassion, to the attachment of two young hearts. He spoke no more of separation between them.

Dear Mary was now relieved of all anxiety on her sister's account, and with heart-felt relief did she hear of the arrangements being completed for her mother's establishment under her parents' roof, and her final separation from the worthless Fitz Hugh. During the period succeeding the return of the gentlemen from Wales, many affairs had to be arranged. I now for the first time discovered that Mary was suffering from pangs of which I had never thought her gentle bosom could have been afflicted. And I was indignant when I found that it was the alteration and coldness of Mr. St. John's manner towards her, which had wounded her heart.

In my jealousy for my sweet pupil, I scrupled not to take to task one who till then I had considered too superior ever to err.

Mr. St. John received my reproaches as humbly as if I had been the Archbishop himself; and I soon drew from him the secret of the conduct which had struck Mary as cold and heartless.

The young man had mused amidst the princely domains of Llewellyn that all that splendor would be hers. He had heard the will read which made her so great in worldly riches, and he began to question the right he had to make it all his own by accepting a hand she had perhaps suffered to be placed in his, but to satisfy a beloved father's dying anxiety on her account. A doubt which the subsequent coldness he fancied to have observed in her demeanor, only tended to increase. And therefore it was, that with proud delicacy he refrained from any demonstration in his manner

which might seem to presume that he considered his claim upon her as decided. I had no time to dwell upon these little lover mistakes, so trifling in the mass of graver affairs pressing then on my mind, but which were anything but insignificant to those immediately concerned. I sent Mr. St. John to his "Madonna fair," to worship and adore—and heard no more of coldness, or of jealous doubts.

It was a weight lifted from my burdened mind, the knowledge that both the dear girls had that balm for their bruised spirits at this sad time, which pure and innocent love like theirs affords—a sweet hope to lean on for the future. And their mother's fate was in the mean time decided.

*"Father, I have sinned before Heaven and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son, make me as one of thy hired servants."*

In these words may be best described the humble petition of the repentant prodigal of this sad story.

To be received as a servant rather than as a daughter into her parents' house, and separated from all society, devoted herself during the remainder of her life to the tendance of her afflicted parent, was the boon she craved. The relinquishment of her allowance for a legal consent on Fitz Hugh's part to the fulfilment of her desire for an eternal separation was fully acceded to and arranged.

One interview the mother requested with her daughters, in which the young Sybil, softened and subdued, wept in contrition and self-reproach, when the mother, in whom she recognized as the tender nurse on whose bosom she had rested during her illness, was also the being to whom she had addressed reproaches which had added to that high heap of remorse and anguish which was bowing the poor, humbled penitent to the dust.

But the mother was now mistress of herself—she could command her feelings—she knew how her daughter stood, and henceforth, in consideration to those families they were about to enter, she must be to them as one afar off—too happy occasionally to behold their faces and receive with grateful humility the notice of those dear ones from whom her sin had separated her. She must be but as a distant cloud to their sight, nor shadow with her presence their pure and spotless destinies.

They parted; and the fallen daughter was once more admitted to the once happy home of her childhood. But not for her, as for the forgiven child in the Gospel, was the fatted calf prepared, or music or dancing sounded; but with head bent beneath the yoke of shame and humiliation, which among kinsmen and friends must be her robe and meat on this side the grave. Sybil re-entered Oakleigh to bear with unrepining patience the agonizing stings of "memory, thought, remorse," which ever smiting on her breast must render the beautiful home of her childhood no home of rest for her soul, whilst bodily repose and ease was denied her in the hard service to which she had devoted herself—a slave unknown to the mother who had given her birth, whose infirmity of mind and

body made the service one truly of labor and sorrow, from which even the hired menial shrunk with repugnance.

Thus it was my fate to see that once gently beloved daughter, for whom we had hoped such high things, esteeming herself happy, favored in being thus allowed to crown her luckless destiny,

I will not dwell upon all this, so dark, so sad, the shadow seems still pressing on my faithless heart. But I had yet to bind marriage wreaths round youthful brows with my trembling hands. A year after, the hills and valleys of Llewellyn rung with the wedding bells of Mary and Sybil Lennard.

How different to the wedding I had before attended. We then had felt beneath our feet but the roses and lilies with which our path was strewn. Now we had learnt that we stood on the land of crushed hopes and perishable joys.

But these two loved brides are happy in their chastened sunshine—for them I have not had to weep.—Whilst she over whom the broad sunshine fell in its unquenched brilliancy—her sun is set in darkness.

A tall man, of poverty-stricken appearance, with a sullen and fierce expression on his hard, weather-beaten countenance, stood and gazed moodily around on the beautiful solitude surrounding him.

Upon the cottage—the lake—the mountain, and the green valley;—there they still were as he had left them.

And he clenched his hand—for there was only the blue sky above to see him—and ground his teeth in agony, when he thought that in the home of his childhood—that home which is never ceased to be loved by the Irishman's heart—he stood alone. It was his home no more—strangers now pressed round the turf-piled hearth—father, mother, sisters, friends—all gone, like a dream that has come and departed—and he, left a wanderer on the face of the earth, and no home for him left in his native land.

And he—Norah's brother—rushed from the solitude, to drown the sting of memory and grief, in the fiery streams of whisky, joining the mad electioneering crowd, and swelling the uproarious noise, where, in the tumult, many a shilaloe was hurled on the head of a friend's dearest friend—and many was the wail of a woman's voice, as a husband or brother fell in the mad conflict.

What wonder then that a goaded spirit should reek its vengeance on you, Hardress Fitz Hugh. He whose name was, a few minutes before, carried aloft by the breath of multitudes. Hardress Fitz Hugh—the man of the people—lay trampled under their feet—struck down, in his vengeful wrath, by the brother of Norah Mahony.

*"Be sure your sin will find you out!"*

My task is done—the weary task of tears which I pledged to perform to her who is now at rest—and in humble trust in the Saviour of sinners—I place my joy and peace in believing her—one of the inhabitants of those many mansions in which we are taught the faithful penitent may find a place.









VICTOR HUGO.

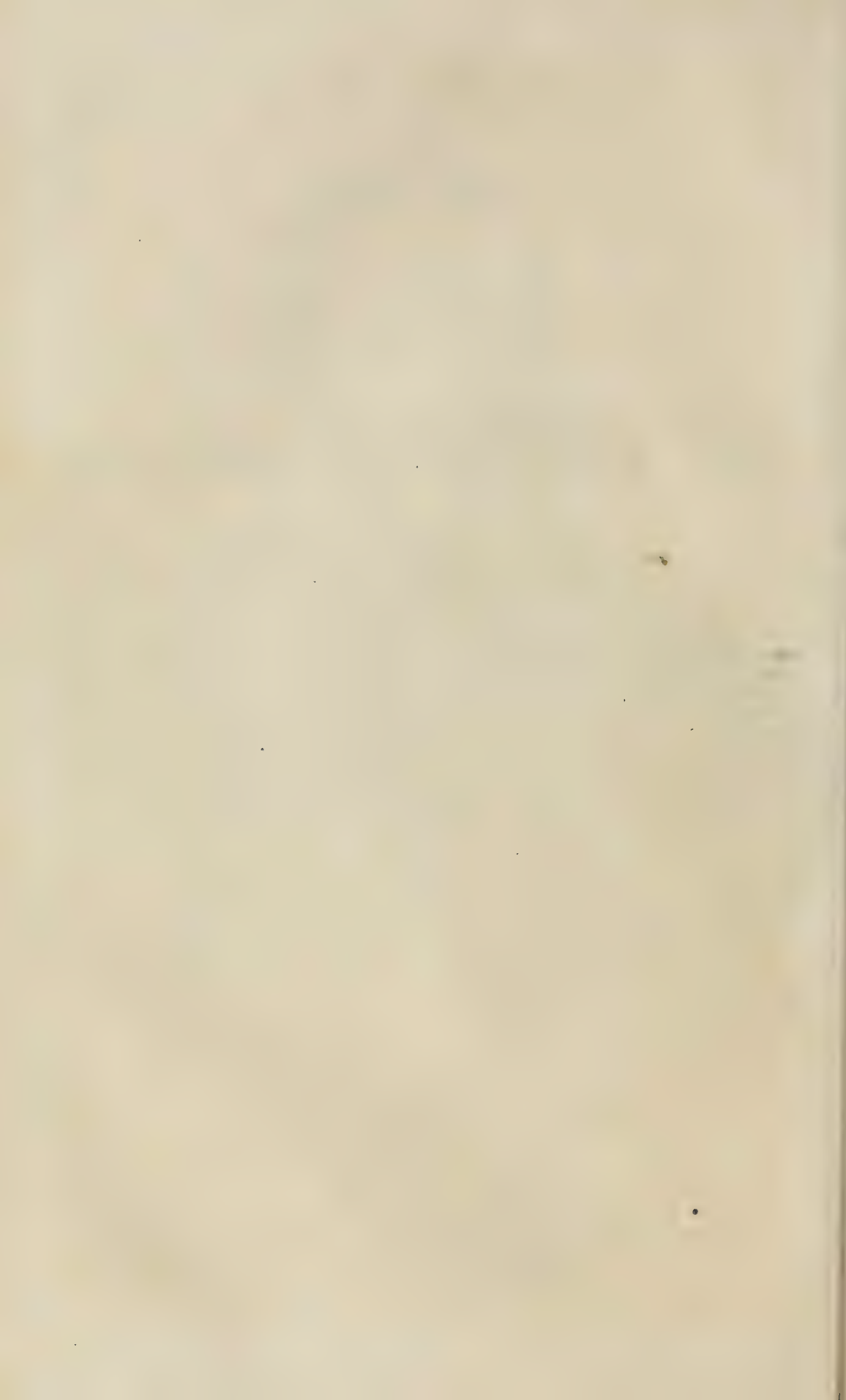
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THE TOILERS OF THE SEA.

A NOVEL.

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# THE TOILERS OF THE SEA.

## FIRST PART.—SIEUR CLUBIN.

### BOOK I.

#### THE HISTORY OF A BAD REPUTATION.

##### I.

##### A WORD WRITTEN ON A WHITE PAGE.

CHRISTMAS day in the year 182—was somewhat remarkable in the island of Guernsey. Snow fell on that day. In the Channel Islands a frosty winter is remarkable, and a fall of snow is an event.

On that Christmas morning, the road which skirts the seashore from St. Pierre Port au Valle was clothed in white. From midnight till the break of day the snow had been falling. Towards nine o'clock, a little after the rising of the wintry sun, as it was too early yet for the Church of England folks to go to St. Sampson's, or for the Wesleyans to repair to Eldad Chapel, the road was almost deserted. Throughout that portion of the highway which separates the first from the second tower, only three foot-passengers could be seen. These were a child, a man, and a woman. Walking at a distance from each other, these wayfarers had no visible connection. The child, a boy of about eight years old, had stopped, and was looking curiously at the wintry scene. The man walked behind the woman, at a distance of about a hundred paces. Like her he was coming from the direction of the church of St. Sampson. The appearance of the man, who was still young, was something between that of a workman and a sailor. He wore his working-day clothes—a kind of Guernsey shirt of coarse brown stuff, and trousers partly concealed by tarpaulin leggings—a costume which seemed to indicate that, notwithstanding the holy day, he was going to no place of worship. His heavy shoes of rough leather, with their soles covered with large nails, left upon the snow, as he walked, a print more like that of a prison lock than the foot of a man. The woman, on the contrary, was evidently dressed for church. She wore a large mantle of black silk, wadded, under which she had coquettishly adjusted a dress of Irish poplin, trimmed alternately with white and pink; but for her red stockings, she might have been taken

for a Parisian. She walked on with a light and free step, so little suggestive of the burden of life that it might easily be seen that she was young. Her movements possessed that subtle grace which indicates the most delicate of all transitions—that soft intermingling, as it were, of two twilights—the passage from the condition of a child to that of womanhood. The man seemed to take no heed of her.

Suddenly, near a group of oaks at the corner of a field, and at the spot called the Basses Maisons, she turned, and the movement seemed to attract the attention of the man. She stopped, seemed to reflect a moment, then stooped, and the man fancied that he could discern that she was tracing with her finger some letters in the snow. Then she rose again, went on her way at a quicker pace, turned once more, this time smiling, and disappeared to the left of the roadway, by the footpath under the hedges which leads to the Château de Lierre. When she had turned for the second time, the man had recognized her as Déruchette, a charming girl of that neighbourhood.

The man felt no need of quickening his pace; and some minutes later he found himself near the group of oaks. Already he had ceased to think of the vanished Déruchette; and if, at that moment, a porpoise had appeared above the water or a robin had caught his eye in the hedges, it is probable that he would have passed on his way. But it happened that his eyes were fixed upon the ground; his gaze fell mechanically upon the spot where the girl had stopped. Two little footprints were there plainly visible; and beside them he read this word, evidently written by her in the snow—

“GILLIATT.”

It was his own name.

He lingered for awhile motionless, looking at the letters, the little footprints, and the snow; and then walked on, evidently in a thoughtful mood.

## II.

## THE BÜ DE LA RUE.

GILLIATT lived in the parish of St. Sampson. He was not liked by his neighbours; and there were reasons for that fact.

To begin with, he lived in a queer kind of "haunted" dwelling. In the islands of Jersey and Guernsey, sometimes in the country, but often in streets with many inhabitants, you will come upon a house the entrance to which is completely barricaded. Holly bushes obstruct the doorway, hideous boards, with nails, conceal the windows below; while the casements of the upper stories are neither closed nor open: all the window-frames are dusty and the glass broken. If there is a little yard, grass grows between its stones; and the parapet of its wall is crumbling away. If there is a garden, it is choked with nettles, brambles, and hemlock, and strange insects abound in it. The chimneys are cracked, the roof is falling in; so much as can be seen from without of the rooms presents a dismantled appearance. The woodwork is rotten; the stone mildewed. The paper of the walls has dropped away and hangs loose, until it presents a history of the bygone fashions of paper-hangings—the scrawling patterns of the time of the Empire, the crescent-shaped draperies of the Directory, the balustrades and pillars of the days of Louis XVI. The thick draperies of cobwebs, filled with flies, indicate the quiet reign long enjoyed by innumerable spiders. Sometimes a broken jug may be noticed on a shelf. Such houses are considered to be haunted. Satan is popularly believed to visit them by night. Houses are like the human beings who inhabit them. They become to their former selves what the corpse is to the living body. A superstitious belief among the people is sufficient to reduce them to this state of death. Then their aspect is terrible. These ghostly houses are common in the Channel Islands.

The rural and maritime populations are easily moved with notions of the active agency of the powers of evil. Among the Channel Isles, and on the neighbouring coast of France, the ideas of the people, on this subject, are deeply rooted. In their view, Belzebub has his ministers in all parts of the earth. It is certain that Belphegor is the ambassador from the infernal regions in France, Hugin in Italy, Belial in Turkey, Thamug in Spain, Martinet in Switzerland, and Mammon in England. Satan is an emperor just like any other: a sort of Satan Caesar. His establishment is well organized. Dagon is grand almoner, Succor Benoth is chief of the Eunuchs; Asmodeus, banker at the gaming-table; Kobal, manager of the theatre, and Verdetet grand-master of the ceremonies. Nybbas is the court fool; Wierus, a savant, a good strylogogue, and a man of much learning in demonology, calls Nybbas the great parodist.

The Norman fishermen, who frequent the

Channel, have many precautions to take at sea, by reason of the illusions with which Satan environs them. It has long been an article of popular faith, that Saint Maclou inhabited the great square rock called Ortach, in the sea between Auvigny and Les Casquets; and many old sailors used to declare that they had often seen him there, seated and reading in a book. Accordingly the sailors, as they passed, were in the habit of kneeling many times before the Ortach rock, until the day when the fable was destroyed, and the truth took its place. It has been discovered, and is now well established, that the lonely inhabitant of the rock is not a saint, but a devil. This evil spirit, whose name is Jochmus, had the impudence to pass himself off, for many centuries, as Saint Maclou. Even the Church herself is not proof against snares of this kind. The demons Raguhel, Oribel, and Tobiel, were regarded as saints until the year 745; when Pope Zachary, having at length unearthed them, turned them out of saintly company. This sort of weeding of the saintly calendar is certainly very useful; but it can only be practised by very accomplished judges of devils and their ways.

The old inhabitants of these parts relate—though all this refers to bygone times—that the Catholic population of the Norman Archipelago was once, though quite involuntary, even in more intimate correspondence with the powers of darkness than the Huguenots themselves. How this happened, however, we do not pretend to say; but it is certain that the people suffered considerable annoyance from this cause. It appears that Satan had taken a fancy to the Catholics, and sought their company a good deal—a circumstance which has given rise to the belief that the Devil is more Catholic than Protestant. One of his most insufferable familiarities consisted in paying nocturnal visits to married Catholics in bed, just at the moment when the husband had fallen fast asleep, and the wife had begun to doze: a fruitful source of domestic trouble. Patouillet was of opinion that a faithful biography of Voltaire ought not to be without some allusion to this practice of the Evil One. The truth of all this is perfectly well known, and described in the forms of excommunication in the rubric *de erroribus nocturnis et de semine diabolorum*. The practice was raging particularly at St. Heller's towards the end of the last century, probably as a punishment for the Revolution; for the evil consequences of revolutionary excesses are incalculable. However this may have been, it is certain that this possibility of a visit from the demon at night, when it is impossible to see distinctly, or even in slumber, caused much embarrassment among orthodox dames. The idea of giving to the world a Voltaire was by no means a pleasant one. One of these, in some anxiety, consulted her confessor on this extremely difficult subject, and the best mode for timely discovery of the cheat. The confessor replied, "In order to be sure that it is your



seen in the hands of Gilliatt a very remarkable kind of shell.

It was not uncommon to hear dialogues like the following among the country people:

"I have a fine bull here, neighbour, what do you say?"

"Very fine, neighbour."

"It is a fact? tho'tis I who say it; he is better though for tallow than for meat."

"Ver dia!"

"Are you sure that Gilliatt hasn't cast his eye upon it?"

Gilliatt would stop sometimes beside a field where some labourers were assembled, or near gardens in which gardeners were engaged, and would perhaps hear these mysterious words:

"When the *mors du diable* flourishes, reap the winter rye."

(The *mors du diable* is the scabwort plant.)

"The ash-tree is coming out in leaf. There will be no more frost."

"Summer solstice, thistle in flower."

"If it rain not in June, the wheat will turn white. Look out for mildew."

"When the wild cherry appears, beware of the full moon."

"If the weather on the sixth day of the new moon is like that of the fourth, or like that of the fifth day, it will be the same nine times out of twelve in the first case, and eleven times out of twelve in the second, during the whole month."

"Keep your eye on neighbours who go to law with you. Beware of malicious influences. A pig which has had warm milk given to it will die. A cow which has had its teeth rubbed with leeks will eat no more."

"Spawning time with the smelts; beware of fevers."

"When frogs begin to appear, sow your melons."

"When the liverwort flowers, sow your barley."

"When the limes are in bloom, mow the meadows."

"When the elm-tree flowers, open the hot-house panes."

"When tobacco-fields are in blossom, close your green-houses."

And, fearful to relate, these occult precepts were not without truth. Those who put faith in them could vouch for the fact.

One night, in the month of June, when Gilliatt was playing upon his bagpipe, upon the sand-hills on the shore of the Demie de Fontenelle, it had happened that the mackerel fishing had failed.

One evening, at low water, it happened that a cart filled with sea-weed for manure overturned on the beach, in front of Gilliatt's house. It is most probable that he was afraid of being brought before the magistrates, for he took considerable trouble in helping to raise the cart, and he filled it again himself.

A little neglected child of the neighbourhood being troubled with vermin, he had gone him-

self to St. Pierre Port, and had returned with an ointment, with which he rubbed the child's head. Thus Gilliatt had removed the pest from the poor child, which was an evidence that Gilliatt himself had originally given it; for everybody knows that there is a certain charm for giving vermin to people.

Gilliatt was suspected of looking into wells—a dangerous practice with those who have an evil eye; and, in fact, at Arculons, near St. Pierre Port, the water of a well became unwholesome. The good woman to whom this well belonged said to Gilliatt:

"Look here, at this water;" and she showed him a glass full. Gilliatt acknowledged it.

"The water is thick," he said; "that is true."

The good woman, who dreaded him in her heart, said, "Make it sweet again for me."

Gilliatt asked her some questions: whether she had a stable? whether the stable had a drain? whether the gutter of the drain did not pass near the well? The good woman replied "Yes." Gilliatt went into the stable; worked at the drain; turned the gutter in another direction; and the water became pure again. People in the country round thought what they pleased. A well does not become foul one moment and sweet the next without good cause; the bottom of the affair was involved in obscurity; and, in short, it was difficult to escape the conclusion that Gilliatt himself had bewitched the water.

On one occasion, when he went to Jersey, it was remarked that he had taken a lodging in the street called the *Rue des Alleurs*. Now the word *alleurs* signifies spirits from the other world.

In villages it is the custom to gather together all these little hints and indications of a man's career; and when they are gathered together, the total constitutes his reputation among the inhabitants.

It happened that Gilliatt was once surprised with blood issuing from his nose. The circumstance appeared grave. The master of a barque who had sailed almost entirely round the world affirmed that among the Tongusians all sorcerers were subject to bleeding at the nose. In fact, when you see a man in those parts bleeding at the nose, you know at once what is in the wind. Moderate reasoners, however, remarked that the characteristics of sorcerers among the Tongusians may possibly not apply in the same degree to the sorcerers of Guernsey.

In the environs of one of the St. Michels, he had been seen to stop in a close belonging to the Huriaux, skirting the highway from the Videclins. He whistled in the field, and a moment afterwards a crow alighted there; a moment later, a magpie. The fact was attested by a worthy man who has since been appointed to the office of Douzenier of the Douzaine, as those are called who are authorized to make a new survey and register of the fief of the king.

At Hamel, in the Vingtaine of L'Epine,

there lived some old women who were positive of having heard one morning a number of swallows distinctly calling "Gilliatt."

Add to all this that he was of a spiteful temper.

One day, a poor man was beating an ass. The ass was obstinate. The poor man gave him a few kicks in the belly with his wooden shoe, and the ass fell. Gilliatt ran to raise the unlucky beast, but he was dead. Upon this Gilliatt administered to the poor man a sound thrashing.

Another day, Gilliatt seeing a boy come down from a tree with a brood of little birds, newly hatched and unfledged, he took the brood away from the boy, and carried his malevolence so far as even to carry them back and replace them in the tree.

Some passers-by took up the boy's complaint; but Gilliatt made no reply, except to point to the old birds, who were hovering and crying plaintively over the tree, as they looked for their nest. He had a weakness for birds—another sign by which the people recognize a magician.

Children take a pleasure in robbing the nests of birds along the cliff. They bring home quantities of yellow, blue, and green eggs, with which they make rosaries for mantelpiece ornaments. As the cliffs are peaked, they sometimes slip and are killed. Nothing is prettier than shutters decorated with sea-birds' eggs. Gilliatt's mischievous ingenuity had no end. He would climb, at the peril of his own life, into the steep places of the sea rocks, and hang up bundles of hay, old hats, and all kinds of scarecrows, to deter the birds from building there, and, as a consequence, to prevent the children from visiting those spots.

These are some of the reasons why Gilliatt was disliked throughout the country. Perhaps nothing less could have been expected.

## V.

### MORE SUSPICIOUS FACTS ABOUT GILLIATT.

PUBLIC opinion was not yet quite settled with regard to Gilliatt.

In general he was regarded as a *Marcou*: some went so far as to believe him to be a *Cambion*. A cambion is the child of a woman begotten by a devil.

When a woman bears to her husband seven male children consecutively, the seventh is a *marcou*. But the series must not be broken by the birth of any female child.

The *marcou* has a natural *fleur-de-lys* imprinted upon some part of his body; for which reason he has the power of curing scrofula, exactly the same as the King of France. *Marcou*s are found in all parts of France, but particularly in the Orléanais. Every village of Gâtinais has its *Marcou*. It is sufficient for the cure of the sick that the *Marcou* should breathe upon their wounds, or let them touch his *fleur-de-lys*. The night of Good Friday is

particularly favourable to these ceremonies. Ten years ago there lived, at Ormes in Gâtinais, one of these creatures who was nicknamed the *Beau Marcou*, and consulted by all the country of *Beauce*. He was a cooper, named Foulon, who kept a horse and vehicle. To put a stop to his miracles, it was found necessary to call in the assistance of the gendarmes. His *fleur-de-lys* was on the left breast; other *marcou*s have it in different parts.

There are *Marcou*s at Jersey, Auvigny, and at Guernsey. This fact is doubtless in some way connected with the rights possessed by France over Normandy: or why the *fleur-de-lys*?

There are also in the Channel Islands people afflicted with scrofula, which of course necessitates a due supply of these *marcou*s.

Some people, who happened to be present one day when Gilliatt was bathing in the sea, had fancied that they could perceive upon him a *fleur-de-lys*. Interrogated on that subject he made no reply, but merely burst into laughter. From that time, however, no one ever saw him bathe: he bathed thenceforth only in perilous and solitary places; probably by moonlight: a thing in itself somewhat suspicious.

Those who obstinately regarded him as a cambion, or son of the devil, were evidently in error. They ought to have known that cambions scarce exist out of Germany. But Le Valle and St. Sampson were, fifty years ago, places remarkable for the ignorance of their inhabitants.

To fancy that a resident of the island of Guernsey could be the son of a devil was evidently absurd.

Gilliatt, for the very reason that he caused disquietude among the people, was sought for and consulted. The peasants came in fear, to talk to him of their diseases. That fear itself had in it something of faith in his powers; for in the country, the more the doctor is suspected of magic, the more certain is the cure. Gilliatt had certain remedies of his own, which he had inherited from the deceased woman. He communicated them to all who had need of them, and would never receive money for them. He cured whitlows with applications of herbs. A liquor in one of his phials allayed fever. The chemist of St. Sampson, or *pharmacien*, as they would call him in France, thought that this was probably a decoction of Jesuits' bark. The more generous among his censors admitted that Gilliatt was not so bad a demon in his dealings with the sick, so far as regarded his ordinary remedies. But in his character of a *Marcou*, he would do nothing. If persons afflicted with scrofula came to him to ask to touch the *fleur-de-lys* on his skin, he made no other answer than that of shutting the door in their faces. He persistently refused to perform any miracles—a ridiculous position for a sorcerer. No one is bound to be a sorcerer; but when a man is one, he ought not to shirk the duties of his position.



One or two exceptions might be found to this almost universal antipathy. Good master Landoy, of the Clos-Landés, was parish clerk and registrar of St. Pierre Port, custodian of the documents, and keeper of the register of births, marriages, and deaths. This Landoy was vain of his descent from Pierre Landoys, treasurer of the province of Brittany, who was hanged in 1485. One day, when good master Landoy was bathing in the sea, he ventured to swim out too far, and was on the point of drowning: Gilliatt plunged into the water, narrowly escaping drowning himself, and succeeded in saving Landoy. From that day Landoy never spoke an evil word of Gilliatt. To those who expressed surprise at this change, he replied, "Why should I detest a man who never did me any harm, and who has rendered me a service?" The parish clerk and registrar even came at last to feel a sort of friendship for Gilliatt. This public functionary was a man without prejudices. He had no faith in sorcerers. He laughed at people who went in fear of ghostly visitors. For himself, he had a boat in which he amused himself by making fishing excursions in his leisure hours; but he had never seen anything extraordinary, unless it was on one occasion—a woman clothed in white, who rose about the waters in the light of the moon—and even of this circumstance he was not quite sure. Montoune Gahy, the old sorceress of Torteval, had given him a little bag to be worn under the cravat, as a protection against evil spirits: he ridiculed the bag, and knew not what it contained, though, to be sure, he carried it about him, feeling more security with this charm hanging on his neck.

Some courageous persons, emboldened by the example of Landoy, ventured to cite, in Gilliatt's favour, certain extenuating circumstances; a few signs of good qualities, as his sobriety, his abstinence from spirits and tobacco; and sometimes they went so far as to pass this elegant eulogium upon him: "He neither smokes, drinks, chews pigtail, or takes snuff."

Sobriety, however, can only count as a virtue when there are other virtues to support it.

The ban of public opinion lay heavily upon Gilliatt.

In any case, as a Marcou, Gilliatt had it in his power to render great services. On a certain Good Friday, at midnight, a day and an hour propitious to this kind of cure, all the scrupulous people of the island, either by sudden inspiration, or by concerted action, presented themselves in a crowd at the *Bû de la Rue*, and with pitiable sores and imploring gestures, called on Gilliatt to make them clean. But he refused; and herein the people found another proof of his malevolence.

## VI.

### THE DUTCH SLOOP.

SUCH was the character of Gilliatt. The young women considered him ugly.

Ugly he was not. He might, perhaps, have been called handsome. There was something in his profile of rude but antique grace. In repose it had some resemblance to that of a sculptured Dacian on the Trajan column. His ears were small, delicate, without lobes, and of an admirable form for hearing. Between his eyes he had that proud vertical hue, which indicates, in a man, boldness and perseverance. The corners of his mouth were depressed, giving a slight expression of bitterness. His forehead had a calm and noble roundness. The clear pupils of his eyes possessed a steadfast look, although troubled a little with that involuntary movement of the eyelids which fishermen contract from the glitter of the waves. His laugh was boyish and pleasing. No ivory could be of a finer white than his teeth; but exposure to the sun had made him swarthy as a Moor. The ocean, the tempest, and the darkness cannot be braved with impunity. At thirty, he looked, already, like a man of forty-five. He wore the sombre mask of the wind and the sea.

The people had nicknamed him Gilliatt, the evil one.

There is an Indian fable to the effect that one day the god Brahma inquired of the Spirit of Power, "Who is stronger than thee?" and the spirit replied, "Cunning." A Chinese proverb says, "What could not the lion do, if he was the monkey also?" Gilliatt was neither the lion nor the monkey; but his actions gave some evidence of the truth of the Chinese proverb and of the Hindoo fable. Although only of ordinary height and strength, he was enabled, so inventive and powerful was his dexterity, to lift burdens that might have taxed a giant, and to accomplish feats which would have done credit to an athlete.

He had in him something of the power of the gymnast. He used, with equal address, his left hand and his right.

He never carried a gun, but was often seen with his net. He spared the birds, but not the fish. His knowledge and skill as a fisherman were, indeed, very considerable. He was an excellent swimmer.

Solitude either develops the mental powers, or renders men dull and vicious. Gilliatt sometimes presented himself under both these aspects. At times, when his features wore that air of strange surprise already mentioned, he might have been taken for a man of mental powers scarcely superior to the lower animals. At other moments, an indescribable air of penetration lighted up his face. Ancient Chaldaea possessed some men of this stamp. At certain times the dulness of the shepherd mind became transparent, and revealed the inspired sage.

After all, he was but a poor man; uninstructed, save to the extent of reading and writing. It was probable that the condition of his mind was at that limit which separates the dreamer from the thinker. The thinker wills, the dreamer is a passive instrument. Solitude sinks deeply into pure natures, and modifies them, in a

certain degree. They become, unconsciously, penetrated with a kind of sacred awe. The shadow, in which the mind of Gilliatt constantly dwelt, was composed in almost equal degrees of two elements, both obscure, but very different. Within himself all was ignorance and weakness; without, infirmity and mysterious power.

By dint of frequent climbing on the rocks, of escalading the rugged cliffs, of going to and fro among the islands in all weathers, of navigating any sort of craft which came to hand, of venturing night and day in difficult channels, he had become, without taking count of his other advantages, and merely in following his fancy and pleasure, a seaman of extraordinary skill.

He was a born pilot. The true pilot is the man who navigates the bed of the ocean even more than its surface. The waves of the sea are an external problem, continually modified by the submarine conditions of the waters in which the vessel is making her way. To see Gilliatt guiding his craft among the reefs and shallows of the Norman Archipelago, one might have fancied that he carried in his head a plan of the bottom of the sea. He was familiar with it all, and feared nothing.

He was better acquainted with the buoys in the channels than the cormorants who make them their resting-places. The almost imperceptible differences which distinguish the four upright buoys of the *Creux*, *Alligande*, the *Trémies*, and the *Sardrette*, were perfectly visible and clear to him, even in misty weather. He hesitated neither at the oval, apple-headed buoy of *Anfré*, nor at the triple iron point of the *Rousse*, nor at the white ball of the *Corbette*, nor at the black ball of *Longue Pierre*; and there was no fear of his confounding the cross of *Goubeau* with the sword planted in earth at *La Platte*, nor the hammer-shaped buoy of the *Barbées* with the curled-tail buoy of the *Moulinet*.

His rare skill in seamanship showed itself in a striking manner one day at Guernsey, on the occasion of one of those sea tournaments which are called regattas. The feat to be performed was to navigate alone a boat with four sails from St. Sampson to the Isle of Herm, at one league distance, and to bring the boat back from Herm to St. Sampson. To manage, without assistance, a boat with four sails, is a feat which every fisherman is equal to, and the difficulty seemed little; but there was a condition which rendered it far from simple. The boat, to begin with, was one of those large and heavy sloops of bygone times which the sailors of the last century knew by the name of "Dutch Bellies." This ancient style of flat, pot-bellied craft, carrying on the larboard and starboard sides, in compensation for the want of a keel, two wings which lower themselves, sometimes the one, sometimes the other, according to the wind, may occasionally be met with still at sea. In the second place, there was the return from Herm, a journey which was rendered more dif-

ficult by a heavy ballasting of stones. The conditions were to go empty, but to return loaded. The sloop was the prize of the contest. It was dedicated beforehand to the winner. This "Dutch Belly" had been employed as a pilot-boat. The pilot who had rigged and worked it for twenty years was the most robust of all the sailors of the Channel. When he died, no one had been found capable of managing the sloop; and it was in consequence determined to make it the prize of the regatta. The sloop, though not decked, had some sea qualities, and was a tempting prize for a skilful sailor. Her mast was somewhat forward, which increased the motive power of her sails, besides having the advantage of not being in the way of her pilot. It was a strong-built vessel, heavy, but roomy, and taking the open sea well; in fact, a good, serviceable craft. There was eager anxiety for the prize; the task was a rough one, but the reward of success was worth having. Seven or eight fishermen among the most vigorous of the island presented themselves. One by one they essayed, but not one could succeed in reaching Herm. The last one who tried his skill was known for having crossed, in a rowing boat, the terrible narrow sea between Sark and Brecq-Hou. Sweating with his exertions, he brought back the sloop, and said "It is impossible." Gilliatt then entered the bark, seized first of all the oar, then the mainsail, and pushed out to sea. Then, without either making fast the boom, which would have been imprudent, or letting it go, which kept the sail under his direction, and leaving the boom to move with the wind without tacking, he held the tiller with his left hand. In three quarters of an hour he was at Herm. Three hours later, although a strong breeze had sprung up and was blowing across the roads, the sloop, guided by Gilliatt, returned to St. Sampson with its load of stones. He had, with an extravagant display of his resources, even added to the cargo the little bronze cannon at Herm, which the people were in the habit of firing off on the 5th of November, by way of rejoicing over the death of Guy Fawkes.

Guy Fawkes, by the way, has been dead one hundred and sixty years; a remarkably long period of rejoicing.

Gilliatt, thus burdened and encumbered, although he had the Guy Fawkes'-day cannon in the boat and the south wind in his sails, steered, or rather brought back, the pot-bellied craft to St. Sampson.

Seeing which, Mess Lethierry exclaimed, "There's a brave sailor for you!"

And he held out his hand to Gilliatt.

We shall have occasion to speak again of Mess Lethierry.

The sloop was awarded to Gilliatt.

This adventure detracted nothing from his evil reputation.

Several persons declared that the feat was not at all astonishing, for that Gilliatt had concealed in the boat a branch of wild medlar. But this could not be proved.



From that day forward, Gilliatt navigated no boat except the old sloop. In this heavy craft he went on his fishing avocation. He kept it at anchor in the excellent little shelter which he had all to himself, under the very wall of his house of the *Bû de la Rue*. At nightfall, he cast his nets over his shoulder, traversed his little garden, climbed over the parapet of dry stones, stepped lightly from rock to rock, and, jumping into the sloop, pushed out to sea.

He brought home heavy takes of fish; but people state that his medlar branch was always hanging up in the boat. No one had ever seen this branch, but every one believed in its existence.

When he had more fish than he wanted, he did not sell it, but gave it away.

The poor people took his gift, but were little grateful, for they knew the secret of his medlar branch. Such devices cannot be permitted. It is unlawful to trick the sea out of its treasures.

He was a fisherman; but he was something more. He had, by instinct or for amusement, acquired a knowledge of three or four trades. He was a cabinet-maker, worker in iron, wheelwright, boat-caulker, and, to some extent, an engineer. No one could mend a broken wheel better than he could. He manufactured, in a fashion of his own, all the wheels which fishermen use. In a little corner of the *Bû de la Rue* he had a small forge and an anvil; and the sloop having but one anchor, he had succeeded, without help, in making another. The anchor was excellent. The ring had the necessary strength; and Gilliatt, though entirely un instructed in this branch of the smith's art, had found the exact dimensions of the stock for preventing the over-balancing of the fluke ends.

He had patiently replaced all the nails in the planks by rivets, which rendered rust in the holes impossible.

In this way he had much improved the sea-going qualities of the sloop. He employed it sometimes when he took a fancy to spend a month or two in some solitary islet, like Chousey or Les Casquets. People said "Aye! aye! Gilliatt is away;" but this was a circumstance which nobody regretted.

## VII.

### A FIT TENANT FOR A HAUNTED HOUSE.

GILLIATT was a man of dreams, hence his daring, hence also his timidity. He had ideas on many things which were peculiarly his own.

There was in his character, perhaps, something of the visionary and the transcendentalist. Hallucinations may haunt the poor peasant like Martin, no less than the king like Henry IV. There are times when the unknown reveals itself in a mysterious way to the spirit of man. A sudden rent in the veil of darkness will make manifest things hitherto unseen, and then close

again upon the mysteries within. Such visions have occasionally the power to effect a transfiguration in those whom they visit. They convert a poor camel-driver into a Mohammed; a peasant girl tending her goats into a Joan of Arc. Solitude generates a certain amount of sublime exaltation. It is like the smoke arising from the burning bush. A mysterious lucidity of mind results, which converts the student into a seer, and the poet into a prophet: herein we find a key to the mysteries of the Sinai, Kedron, Ombos; to the intoxication of the Castilian camels, the revelations of the month Busio. Hence, too, we have Peleia at Dodona, the sibyls at Delphos, Trophonius in Boeotia, of Ezekiel on the Kebar, and Jeremiah in the Thebaid.

More frequently this visionary state overwhelms and stupefies its victim. There is such a thing as divine besottedness. The Hindoo fakir bears about with him the burden of his vision, as the Cretin his goitre. Luther holding converse with devils in his garret at Wittenberg; Pascal shutting out the view of the infernal regions with the screen of his cabinet; the African Obi conversing with the white-faced god Bossum—on each and all the same phenomenon, diversely interpreted by the minds in which they manifest themselves, according to their capacity and power. Luther and Pascal were grand, and are grand still; the Obi is simply a poor, half-witted creature.

Gilliatt was neither so exalted nor so low. He was a dreamer: nothing more.

Nature presented itself to him under a somewhat strange aspect.

Just as he had often found in the perfectly limpid water of the sea strange creatures of considerable size and of various shapes, of the medusa genus, which out of the water bore a resemblance to soft crystal, and which, cast again into the sea, became lost to sight in that medium by reason of their identity in transparency and colour, so he imagined that other transparencies, similar to these almost invisible denizens of the ocean, might probably inhabit the air around us. The birds are scarcely inhabitants of the air, but rather amphibious creatures, passing much of their lives upon the earth. Gilliatt could not believe the air a mere desert. He used to say, "Since the water is filled with life, why not the atmosphere?" Creatures colourless and transparent like the air would escape from our observation. What proof have we that there are no such creatures? Analogy would indicate that the liquid fields of air must have their swimming inhabitants, even as the waters of the deep. These aerial fish would of course be diaphanous; a provision of their wise Creator for our sakes as well as their own. Allowing the light to pass through their forms, casting no shadow, having no defined outline, they would necessarily remain unknown to us, and beyond the grasp of human sense. Gilliatt indulged the wild fancy that if it were possible to exhaust the earth of its atmosphere, or that if we could fish the air as we fish the depths

of the sea, we should discover the existence of a multitude of strange animals. And then, he would add in his reverie, many things would be made clear.

Reverie, which is thought in its nebulous state, borders closely upon the land of sleep, by which it is bounded as by a natural frontier. The discovery of a new world, in the form of an atmosphere filled with transparent creatures, would be the beginning of a knowledge of the vast unknown. But beyond opens out the 'il-limittable domain of the possible, teeming with yet other beings, and characterized by other phenomena. All this would be nothing supernatural, but merely the occult continuation of the infinite variety of creation. In the midst of that laborious idleness, which was the chief feature in his existence, Gilliatt was singularly observant. He even carried his observations into the domain of sleep. Sleep has a close relation with the possible, or, as Frenchmen say, the *invraisemblable*. The world of sleep has an existence of its own. Night-time, regarded as a separate sphere of creation, is a universe in itself. The material nature of man, upon which philosophers tell us that a column of air forty-five miles in height continually presses, is wearied out at night, sinks into lassitude, lies down, and finds repose. The eyes of the flesh are closed; but in that drooping head, less inactive than is supposed, other eyes are opened. The unknown reveals itself. The shadowy existences of the invisible world become more akin to man; whether it be that there is a real communication, or whether things far off in the unfathomable abyss are mysteriously brought nearer, it seems as if the impalpable creatures inhabiting space come then to contemplate our natures, curious to comprehend the denizens of the earth. Some phantom creation ascends or descends to walk beside us in the dim twilight; some existence altogether different from our own, composed partly of human consciousness, partly of something else, quits his fellows and returns again, after presenting himself for a moment to our inward sight; and the sleeper, not wholly slumbering, nor yet entirely conscious, beholds around him strong manifestations of life—pale spectres, terrible or smiling, dismal phantoms, uncouth masks, unknown faces, hydra-headed monsters, undefined shapes, reflections of moonlight where there is no moon, vague fragments of monstrous forms. All these things which come and go in the troubled atmosphere of sleep, and to which men give the name of dreams, are, in truth, only realities invisible to those who walk about the daylight world.

So, at least, thought Gilliatt.

### VIII.

#### THE GILD-HOLM-'UR SEAT.

THE anxious visitor, in these days, would seek in vain in the little bay of Houmet for the

house in which Gilliatt lived, or for his garden, or the creek in which he sheltered the Dutch sloop. The *Bû de la Rue* no longer exists. Even the little peninsula on which his house stood has vanished, levelled by the pickaxe of the quarryman, and carried away cart-load by cart-load, by dealers in rock and granite. It must be sought now in the churches, the palaces, and the quays of a great city. All that ridge of rocks has been long ago conveyed to London.

These long lines of broken cliffs in the sea, with their frequent gaps and crevices, are like miniature chains of mountains. They strike the eye with the impression which a giant may be supposed to have in contemplating the Cordilleras. In the language of the country they are called "Banques." These banques vary considerably in form. Some resemble a long spine, of which each rock forms one of the vertebæ; others are like the back-bone of a fish; while some bear an odd resemblance to a crocodile in the act of drinking.

At the extremity of the ridge on which the *Bû de la Rue* was situate was a large rock, which the fishing people of Houmet called the "Beast's Horn." This rock, a sort of pyramid, resembled, though less in height, the "Pinnacle" of Jersey. At high water the sea divided it from the ridge, and the Horn stood alone; at low water it was approached by an isthmus of rocks. The remarkable feature of this "Beast's Horn" was a sort of natural seat on the side next the sea, hollowed out by the water and polished by the rains. This seat, however, was a treacherous one. The stranger was insensibly attracted to it by "the beauty of the prospect," as the Guernsey folks said. Something detained him there in spite of himself, for there is a charm in a wide view. The seat seemed to offer itself for his convenience; it formed a sort of niche in the peaked *façade* of the rock. To climb up to it was easy, for the sea, which had fashioned it out of its rocky base, had also cast beneath it, at convenient distances, a kind of natural stairs composed of flat stones. The perilous abyss is full of these snares; beware, therefore, of its proffered aids. The spot was tempting: the stranger mounted and sat down. There he found himself at his ease; for his seat he had the granite rounded and hollowed out by the foam; for supports, two rocky elbows which seemed made expressly; against his back the high vertical wall of rock which he looked up to and admired, without thinking of the impossibility of scaling it. Nothing could be more simple than to fall into reverie in that convenient resting-place. All around spread the wide sea, far off the ships were seen passing to and fro. It was possible to follow a sail with the eye till it sank in the horizon beyond the Casquets. The stranger was entranced: he looked around, enjoying the beauty of the scene, and the light touch of wind and wave. There is a sort of bat found at Cayenne, which has the power of fanning people to



sleep in the shade with a gentle beating of its dusky wings. Like this strange creature the wind wanders about, alternately destroying or lulling into security. So the stranger would continue contemplating the sea, listening for a movement in the air, and yielding himself up to dreamy indolence. When the eyes are satiated with light and beauty, it is a luxury to close them for awhile. Suddenly the stranger would arouse; but it was too late. The sea had crept up step by step; the waters surrounded the rock; the stranger had been lured on to his death.

A terrible rock was this in a rising sea.

The tide gathers at first insensibly, then with violence; when it touches the rocks a sudden wrath seems to possess it, and it foams. Swimming is difficult in the breakers: excellent swimmers have been lost at the Horn of the *Bû de la Rue*.

In certain places, and at certain periods, the aspect of the sea is dangerous—fatal; as at times is the glance of a woman.

Very old inhabitants of Guernsey used to call this niche, fashioned in the rock by the waves,

“Gild-Holm-’Ur” seat, or Kidormur; a Celtic word, say some authorities, which those who understand Celtic cannot interpret, and which all who understand French can—“*Qui-dort-meurt*.”\* such is the country folks’ translation.

The reader may choose between the translation *Qui-dort-meurt*, and that given in 1819, I believe in *The Armorican*, by M. Athenoz. According to this learned Celtic scholar, Gild-Holm-’Ur signifies “The resting-place of birds.”

There is, at Aurigny, another seat of this kind, called the Monk’s Chair, so well sculptured by the waves, and with steps of rock so conveniently placed, that it might be said that the sea politely sets a footstool for those who rest there.

In the open sea, at high water, the Gild-Holm-’Ur was no longer visible; the water covered it entirely.

The Gild-Holm-’Ur was a neighbour of the *Bû de la Rue*. Gilliatt knew it well, and often seated himself there. Was it his meditating place? No. We have already said he did not meditate, but dream. The sea, however, never surprised him there.

## BOOK II.

### MESS LETHIERRY.

#### I.

#### A TROUBLED LIFE, BUT A QUIET CONSCIENCE.

MESS LETHIERRY, a conspicuous man in Saint Sampson, was a redoubtable sailor. He had voyaged a great deal. He had been a cabin-boy, seaman, topmast-man, second mate, mate, pilot, and captain. He was at this period a privateer. There was not a man to compare with him for general knowledge of the sea. He was brave in putting off to ships in distress. In foul weather he would take his way along the beach, scanning the horizon. “What have we yonder?” he would say; “some craft in trouble?” Whether it were an interloping Weymouth fisherman, a cutter from Aurigny, a bisquiere from Courseulle, the yacht of some nobleman, an English craft or a French one—poor or rich, mattered little. He jumped into a boat, called together two or three strong fellows, or did without them, as the case might be; pushed out to sea, rose and sank, and rose again on rolling waves, plunged into the storm, and encountered the danger face to face. Then far off, amid the storm and lightning, and drenched with water, he was sometimes seen upright in his boat like a lion with a foaming mane. Often he would pass whole days in danger amidst the waves, the hail, and the wind, making his way to the sides of foundering vessels during the tempest, and rescuing men and merchandise. At night, after feats like these,

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he would return home, and pass his time in knitting stockings.

For fifty years he led this kind of life—from ten years of age to sixty—so long did he feel himself still young. At sixty he began to discover that he could lift no longer with one hand the great anvil at the forge at Varclin. This anvil weighed three hundred weight. At length rheumatic pains compelled him to be a prisoner; he was forced to give up his old struggle with the sea, to pass from the heroic into the patriarchal stage, to sink into the condition of a harmless, worthy old fellow.

Happily his rheumatism attacks happened at the period when he had secured a comfortable competency. These two consequences of labour are rational companions. At the moment when men become rich, how often comes paralysis—the sorrowful crowning of a laborious life.

Old and weary men say among themselves, “Let us rest and enjoy life.”

The population of islands like Guernsey is composed of men who have passed their lives in going about their little fields, or in sailing round the world. These are the two classes of the labouring people—those who labour on the land, and those who toil upon the sea. Mess Lethierry was of the latter class; he had had a life of hard work. He had been upon the Continent, was for some years a ship-carpenter at Rochefort, and afterwards at Cette. We have

\* He who sleeps must die.

just spoken of sailing round the world: he had made the circuit of all France, getting work as a journeyman carpenter; he had been employed at the great salt-works of Franche-Comte. Though an humble man, he had led a life of adventure. In France he had learned to read, to think, to have a will of his own. He had had a hand in many things, and in all he had done had kept a character for probity. At bottom, however, he was simply a sailor. The water was his element; he used to say that he lived with the fish when really at home. In short, his whole existence, except two or three years, had been devoted to the ocean. Flung into the water, as he said, he had navigated the great oceans both of the Atlantic and the Pacific, but he preferred the Channel. He used to exclaim enthusiastically, "That is the sea for a rough time of it!" He was born at sea, and at sea would have preferred to end his days. After sailing several times round the world, and seeing most countries, he had returned to Guernsey, and never permanently left the island again. Henceforth his great voyages were to Granville and St. Malo.

Mess Lethierry was a Guernsey man—that peculiar amalgamation of Frenchman and Norman, or rather English. He had within himself this quadruple extraction, merged and almost lost in that far wider country, the ocean. Throughout his life, and wheresoever he went, he had preserved the habits of a Norman fisherman.

All this, however, did not prevent his looking now and then into some old book; of taking pleasure in reading, in knowing the names of philosophers and poets, and in talking a little now and then in all languages.

## II.

### A CERTAIN PREDILECTION.

GILLIATT had in his nature something of the uncivilized man; Mess Lethierry had the same.

Lethierry's uncultivated nature, however, was not without certain refinements.

He was fastidious upon the subject of women's hands. In his early years, while still a lad, passing from the stage of cabin-boy to that of sailor, he had heard the Admiral de Suffren say, "There goes a pretty girl; but what horrible great red hands." An observation from an admiral on any subject is a command, a law, an authority far above that of an oracle. The exclamation of Admiral de Suffren had rendered Lethierry fastidious and exacting in the matter of small and white hands. His own hand, a large club fist of the colour of mahogany, was like a mallet or a pair of pincers for a friendly grasp, and, tightly closed, would almost break a paving-stone.

He had never married; he had either no inclination for matrimony, or had never found a suitable match. That, perhaps, was due to his

being a stickler for hands like those of a duchess. Such hands are indeed somewhat rare among the fishermen's daughters at Portbail.

It was whispered, however, that at Rochefort, on the Charente, he had, once upon a time, made the acquaintance of a certain grisette realizing his ideal. She was a pretty girl, with graceful hands, but she was a sailor, and had also a habit of scratching. Woe betide any one who attacked her; her nails, though capable at a pinch of being turned into claws, were of a whiteness which left nothing to be desired. It was these peculiarly bewitching nails which had first enchanted and then disturbed the peace of Lethierry, who, fearing that he might one day become no longer master of his mistress, had decided not to conduct that young lady to the nuptial altar.

Another time he met at Aurigny a country girl who pleased him. He thought of marriage, when one of the inhabitants of the place said to him, "I congratulate you; you will have for your wife a good fuel-maker." Lethierry asked the meaning of this. It appeared that the country people at Aurigny have a certain custom of collecting manure from their cow-houses, which they throw against a wall, where it is left to dry and fall to the ground. Cakes of dried manure of this kind are used for fuel, and are called *coipiaux*. A country girl of Aurigny has no chance of getting a husband if she is not a good fuel-maker; but the young lady's special talent only inspired disgust in Lethierry.

Besides, he had in his love matters a kind of rough country folks' philosophy, a sailorlike sort of habit of mind. Always smitten but never enslaved, he boasted of having been in his youth easily conquered by a petticoat, or rather a "*cotillon*;" for what is now-a-days called a crinoline, was in his time called a *cotillon*; a term, which in his use of it signifies both something more and something less than a woman.

These rude seafaring men of the Norman archipelago have a certain amount of shrewdness. Almost all can read and write. On Sundays little cabin-boys may be seen in those parts, seated upon a coil of ropes, reading, with book in hand. From all time these Norman sailors have had a peculiar satirical vein, and have been famous for clever sayings. It was one of these men, the bold pilot Queripel, who said to Montgomery, when he sought refuge in Jersey after the unfortunate accident in killing Henry II. at a tournament with a blow of his lance, "*Tite folle a cassé tête vide*." Another one, Touzeau, a sen-captain at Saint Brelade, was the author of that philosophical pun, erroneously attributed to Camus, "*Afires la mort, les papies deviennent papillons, et les sirés deviennent cirons*."

The mariners of the Channel, who are the true ancient Gauls—the islands, which in these days become rapidly more and more English—preserved for many ages their old French character. The peasant in Sark speaks the lan-



guage of Louis XIV. Forty years ago, the old classical nautical language was to be found in the mouths of the sailors of Jersey and Aurigny. When amongst them, it was possible to imagine oneself carried back to the sea life of the seventeenth century. From that speaking-trumpet which terrified Admiral Hidde, a philologist might have learnt the ancient technicalities of manœuvring and giving orders at sea, in the very words which were roared out to his sailors by Jean Bart. The old French maritime vocabulary is now almost entirely changed, but was still in use in Jersey in 1820.

It was with this uncouth sea dialect in his mouth that Duquesne beat De Ruyter, that Duguay Trouin defeated Wasnaer, and that Tourville, in 1681, poured a broadside into the first galley which bombarded Algiers. It is now a dead language. The idiom of the sea is altogether different. Duperré would not be able to understand Suffren.

The language of French naval signals is not less transformed; there is a long distance between the four pennants, red, white, yellow, and blue, of Labourdonnaye, and the eighteen flags of these days, which, hoisted two and two, three and three, or four and four, furnish, for distant communication, sixty-six thousand combinations, are never deficient, and, so to speak, provide for unforeseen emergencies.

### III.

#### MESS LETHIERRY'S VULNERABLE PART.

MESS LETHIERRY carried his heart upon his sleeve—a large sleeve and a large heart. His failing was that admirable one, self-confidence. He had a certain fashion of his own of undertaking to do a thing. It was a solemn fashion. He said, “I give my word of honour to do it, with God’s help.” That said, he went through with his duty. He put his trust in Providence, nothing more. The little that he went to church was merely formal. At sea, he was superstitious.

Nevertheless, the storm had never yet arisen which could daunt him. One reason of this was his impatience of opposition. He could tolerate it neither from the ocean nor from anything else. He meant to have his way; so

much the worse for the sea if it thwarted him. It might try, if it would, but Mess Lethierry would not give in. A refractory wave could no more stop him than an angry neighbour. What he had said was said; what he planned out was done. He bent neither before an objection nor before the tempest. The word “no” had no existence for him, whether it was in the mouth of a man or in the angry muttering of a thunder cloud. In the teeth of all he went on in his way. He would take no refusals. Hence his obstinacy in life, and his intrepidity on the ocean.

He seasoned his simple meal of fish soup for himself, knowing the quantities of pepper, salt, and herbs which it required, and was as well pleased with the cooking as with the meal. To complete the sketch of Lethierry’s peculiarities, the reader must conjure a being to whom the putting on a surtout would amount to a transfiguration; whom a landsman’s great-coat would convert into a strange animal; one who, standing with his locks blown about by the wind, might have represented old Jeah Bart, but who, in the landsman’s round hat, would have looked an idiot; awkward in cities, wild and redoubtable at sea; a man with broad shoulders, fit for a porter; one who indulged in no oaths, was rarely in anger, whose voice had a soft accent, which became like thunder in a speaking-trumpet; a peasant who had read something of the philosophy of Diderot and D’Alembert; a Guernsey man who had seen the Great Revolution; a learned ignoramus, free from bigotry, but indulging in visions, with more faith in the White Lady than in the Holy Virgin; possessing the strength of Polyphemus, the perseverance of Columbus, with a little of the bull in his nature, and a little of the child. Add to these physical and mental peculiarities a somewhat flat nose, large cheeks, a set of teeth still perfect, a face filled with wrinkles, and which seemed to have been buffeted by the waves and subjected to the beating of the winds of forty years, a brow in which the storm and tempest were plainly written—an incarnation of a rock in the open sea—maybe, with this, too, a good-tempered smile always ready to light up his weatherbeaten countenance, and you have before you Mess Lethierry.

Mess Lethierry had two special objects of affection only. Their names were Durande and Déruchette.

## BOOK III.

## DURANDE AND DÉRUCHETTE.

## I.

## PRATTLE AND SMOKE.

THE human body might well be regarded as a mere simulacrum; but it envelops our reality, it cankers our light, and broadens the shadow in which we live. The soul is the reality of our existence. To speak accurately, the human visage is a mask. The true man is that which exists under what is called man. If that being, which thus exists sheltered and secreted behind that illusion which we call the flesh, could be approached, more than one strange revelation would be made. The vulgar error is to mistake the outward husk for the living spirit. Yonder girl, for example, if we could see her as she really is, might she not figure as some bird of the air?

A bird transmuted into a young maiden, what could be more exquisite? Picture it in your own home, and call it Déruchette. Delicious creature! One might be almost tempted to say, "Good-morning, Mademoiselle Goldfinch." The wings are invisible, but the chirping may still be heard. Sometimes, too, she pipes a clear, loud song. In her childlike prattle, the creature is, perhaps, inferior; but in her song, how superior to humanity. When womanhood dawns, this angel flies away; but sometimes returns, bringing back a little one to a mother. Meanwhile, she who is one day to be a mother is for a long while a child; the girl becomes a maiden, fresh and joyous as the lark. Noting her movements, we feel as if it was good of her not to fly away. The dear familiar companion moves at her own sweet will about the house, flits from branch to branch, or rather from room to room; goes to and fro; approaches and retires; plumes her wings, or rather combs her hair, and makes all kinds of gentle noises—murmurings of unspeakable delight to certain ears. She asks a question, and is answered; is asked something in return, and chirps a reply. It is delightful to chat with her when tired of serious talk; for this creature carries with her something of her skyey element. She is, as it were, a thread of gold interwoven with your sombre thoughts; you feel almost grateful to her for her kindness in not making herself invisible, when it would be so easy for her to be even unpalpable; for the beautiful is a necessary of life. There is, in this world, no function more important than that of charming. The forest-glade would be incomplete without the humming-bird. To shed joy around, to radiate happiness, to cast light upon dark days, to be the golden thread of our destiny, and the very spirit of grace and harmony, is not this to render a service? Does not beauty confer a

benefit upon us, even by the simple fact of being beautiful? Here and there we meet with one who possesses that fairy-like power of enchanting all about her; sometimes she is ignorant herself of this magical influence, which is, however, for that reason only the more perfect. Her presence lights up the home; her approach is like a cheering warmth: she passes by, and we are content; she stays awhile, and we are happy. To behold her is to live: she is the Aurora with a human face. She has no need to do more than simply to be: she makes an Eden of the house; Paradise breathes from her; and she communicates this delight to all, without taking any greater trouble than that of existing beside them. Is it not a thing divine to have a smile which, none know how, has the power to lighten the weight of that enormous chain which all the living, in common, drag behind them? Déruchette possessed this smile: we may even say that this smile was Déruchette herself. There is one thing which has more resemblance to ourselves even than our face, and that is our physiognomy: but there is yet another thing which more resembles us than this, and that is our smile. Déruchette smiling was simply Déruchette.

There is something peculiarly attractive in the Jersey and Guernsey race. The women, particularly the young, are remarkable for a pure and exquisite beauty. Their complexion is a combination of the Saxon fairness with the proverbial ruddiness of the Norman people—rosy cheeks and blue eyes; but the eyes want brilliancy. The English training dulls them. Their liquid glances will be irresistible whenever the secret is found of giving them that depth which is the glory of the Parisienne. Happily Englishwomen are not yet quite transformed into the Parisian type. Déruchette was not a Parisian; yet she was certainly not a Guernesiaise. Lethierry had brought her up to be neat, and delicate, and pretty; and so she was.

Déruchette had, at times, an air of bewitching languor, and a certain mischief in the eye which were altogether involuntary. She scarcely knew, perhaps, the meaning of the word love, and yet not unwillingly ensnared those about her in the toils. But all this in her was innocent. She had never thought of marrying.

Déruchette had the prettiest little hands in the world, and little feet to match them. Sweetness and goodness reigned throughout her person; her family and fortune were her uncle Mess Lethierry; her occupation was only to live her daily life; her accomplishments were the knowledge of a few songs; her intellectual gifts were summed up in her simple innocence;



she had the graceful repose of the West Indian woman, mingled at times with giddiness and vivacity, with the teasing playfulness of a child, yet with a dash of melancholy. Her dress was somewhat rustic, and like that peculiar to her country — elegant, though not in accordance with the fashions of great cities; for she wore flowers in her bonnet all the year round. Add to all this an open brow, a neck supple and graceful, chestnut hair, a fair skin slightly freckled with exposure to the sun, a mouth somewhat large, but well-defined, and visited from time to time by a dangerous smile. Such was Déruchette.

Sometimes, in the evening, a little after sunset, at the moment when the dusk of the sky mingles with the dusk of the sea, and twilight invests the waves with a mysterious awe, the people beheld, entering the harbour of St. Sampson, upon the dark rolling waters, a strange, undefined thing, a monstrous form which puffed and blew; a horrid machine which roared like a wild beast, and smoked like a volcano; a species of Hydra foaming among the breakers, and leaving behind it a dense cloud, as it rushed on towards the town with a frightful beating of its fins, and a throat belching forth flame. This was Durande.

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## II.

### THE OLD STORY OF UTOPIA.

A STEAM-BOAT was a prodigious novelty in the waters of the Channel in 182—. The whole coast of Normandy was long strangely excited by it. Now-a-days, ten or a dozen steam vessels, crossing and recrossing within the bounds of the horizon, scarcely attract a glance from loiterers on the shore. At the most, some persons, whose interest or business it is to note such things, will observe the indications in their smoke, of whether they burn Welsh or Newcastle coal. They pass, and that is all. Welcome, if coming home; "a pleasant passage," if outward bound.

Folks were less calm on the subject of these wonderful inventions in the first quarter of the present century; and the new and strange machines, and their long lines of smoke, were regarded with no good-will by the Channel Islanders. In that Puritanical Archipelago, where the Queen of England has been censured for violating the Scriptures\* by using chloroform during her accouchements, the first steam vessel which made its appearance received the name of the "Devil Boat." In the eyes of these worthy fishermen, once Catholics, now Calvinists, but always bigots, it seemed to be a portion of the infernal regions which had been somehow set afloat. A local preacher selected for his discourse the question of "Whether man has the right to make fire and water work together when God had divided them."† No. This beast, composed of iron and fire, did it not re-

semble leviathan? Was it not an attempt to bring chaos again into the universe? This is not the only occasion on which the progress of civilization has been stigmatized as a return to chaos.

"A mad notion, a gross delusion, an absurdity!" Such was the verdict of the Academy of Sciences when consulted by Napoleon, on the subject of steam-boats, early in the present century. The poor fishermen of St. Sampson may be excused for not being, in scientific matters, any wiser than the mathematicians of Paris; and in religious matters, a little island like Guernsey is not bound to be more enlightened than a great continent like America. In the year 1807, when the first steam-boat of Fulton, commanded by Livingston, furnished with one of Watt's engines, sent from England, and manoeuvred, besides her ordinary crew, by two Frenchmen only, André Michaux and another, made her first voyage from New York to Albany, it happened that she set sail on the 17th of August. The Methodists took up this important fact, and in numberless chapels, preachers were heard calling down a malediction on the machine, and declaring that this number 17 was no other than the total of the ten horns and seven heads of the beast in the Apocalypse. In America, they invoked against the steam-boats the beast from the book of Revelations; in Europe, the reptile of the book of Genesis. That was the simple difference.

The savants had rejected steam-boats as impossible; the priests had anathematized them as impious. Science had condemned, and religion consigned them to perdition. Fulton was a new incarnation of Lucifer. The simple people on the coasts and in the villages were confirmed in their reprobation by the uneasiness which they felt at the outlandish sight. The religious view of steam-boats may be summed up as follows: Water and fire were divorced at the creation. This divorce was enjoined by God himself. Man has no right to join what his Maker has put asunder; to reunite what he has disunited. The peasants' view was simply, "I don't like the look of this thing."

No one but Mess Lethierry, perhaps, could have been found at that early period daring enough to dream of such an enterprise as the establishment of a steam vessel between Guernsey and St. Malo. He alone, as an independent thinker, was capable of conceiving such an idea, or, as a hardy mariner, of carrying it out. The French part of his nature, probably, conceived the idea; the English part supplied the energy to put in execution.

How and when this was, we are about to inform the reader.

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## III.

### RANTAINÉ.

ABOUT forty years before the period of the commencement of our narrative, there stood in

\* Genesis, chap. iii., v. 16. † Genesis, chap. i., v. 4.

the suburbs of Paris, near the city wall, between the Fosse-aux-Loups and the Tombe-Issoire, a house of doubtful reputation. It was a lonely, ruinous building, evidently a place for dark deeds on an occasion. Here lived with his wife and child a species of town bandit; a man who had been clerk to an attorney practising at the Châtelet—he figured somewhat later at the Assize Court; the name of this family was Rantaine. On a mahogany chest of drawers in the old house were two china cups, ornamented with flowers, on one of which appeared, in gilt letters, the words, "A souvenir of friendship;" on the other, "A token of esteem." The child lived in an atmosphere of vice in this miserable home. The father and mother having belonged to the lower middle class, it had learnt to read, and they brought it up in a fashion. The mother, pale and almost in rags, gave "instruction," as she called it, mechanically to the little one, heard it spell a few words to her, and interrupted the lesson to accompany her husband on some criminal expedition, or to earn the wages of prostitution. Meanwhile, the holy book remained open on the table as she had left it, and the boy sat beside it, meditating in its way.

The father and mother, detected one day in one of their criminal enterprises, suddenly vanished into that obscurity in which the penal laws envelop convicted malefactors. The child, too, disappeared.

Lethierry, in his wanderings about the world, stumbled one day on an adventurer like himself; helped him out of some scrape; rendered him a kindly service, and was apparently repaid with gratitude. He took a fancy to the stranger, picked him up, and brought him to Guernsey, where, finding him intelligent in learning the duties of a sailor aboard a coasting vessel, he made him a companion. This stranger was the little Rantaine, now grown up to manhood.

Rantaine, like Lethierry, had a bull neck, a large and powerful breadth of shoulders for carrying burdens, and loins like those of the Farnese Hercules. Lethierry and he had a remarkable similarity of appearance: Rantaine was the taller. People who saw them from behind as they were walking side by side along the port, exclaimed, "There are two brothers." On looking them in the face the effect was different: all that was open in the countenance of Lethierry was reserved and cautious in that of Rantaine. Rantaine was an expert swordsman, played on the harmonica, could snuff a candle at twenty paces with a pistol-ball, could strike a tremendous blow with the fist, recite verses from Voltaire's "Henriade," and interpret dreams; he knew by heart "*Les Tombeaux de Saint Denis*," by Treneuil. He talked sometimes of having had relations with the Sultan of Calicut, "whom the Portuguese call the Zamorin." If any one had seen the little memorandum-book which he carried about with him, he would have found notes and jottings of this kind: "At Lyons, in a fissure of the wall of one of the cells in the prison of St. Joseph, a

file." He spoke always with a grave deliberation; he called himself the son of a Chevalier de Saint Louis. His linen was of a miscellaneous kind, and marked with different initials. Nobody was ever more tender than he was on the point of honour; he fought and killed his man. The mother of a pretty actress could not have an eye more watchful for an insult.

He might have stood for the personification of subtlety under an outer garb of enormous strength.

It was the power of his fist, applied one day at a fair upon a *Cabeza de noro*, which had originally taken the fancy of Lethierry. No one in Guernsey knew anything of his adventures. They were of a chequered kind. If the great theatre of destiny had a special wardrobe, Rantaine ought to have taken the dress of harlequin. He had lived, and had seen the world. He had run through the gamut of possible trades and qualities; had been a cook at Madagascar, trainer of birds at Honolulu, a religious journalist at the Galapagos Islands, a poet at Comrawuttee, a freeman at Hayti. In this latter character he had delivered at Grand Goave a funeral oration, of which the local journals have preserved this fragment: "Farewell, then, noble spirit. In the azure vault of the heavens, where thou wingest now thy flight, thou wilt no doubt rejoin the good Abbé Leander Crameau, of Little Goave. Tell him that, thanks to ten years of glorious efforts, thou hast completed the church of the *Anse-à-Veau*. Adieu! transcendent genius, model mason!" His freemason's mask did not prevent him, as we see, wearing a little of the Roman Catholic. The former won to his side the men of progress, and the latter the men of order. He declared himself a white of pure caste, and hated the negroes; though for all that, he would certainly have been an admirer of the Emperor Soultouque. In 1815, at Bordeaux, the glow of his royalist enthusiasm broke forth in the shape of a huge white feather in his cap. His life had been a series of eclipses, of appearances, disappearances, and reappearances. He was a sort of revolving light on the coasts of scampdom. He knew a little Turkish; instead of "guillotined" would say "*néboïssé*." He had been a slave in Tripoli, in the house of a Thaleb, and had learnt Turkish by dint of blows with a stick. His employment had been to stand at evenings at the doors of the mosque, there to read aloud to the faithful the Koran inscribed upon slips of wood, or pieces of camel leather. It is not improbable that he was a renegade.

He was capable of everything, and something worse.

He had a trick of laughing loud and knitting his brows at the same time. He used to say, "In politics, I esteem only men inaccessible to its influences;" or, "I am for decency and good morals;" or, "The pyramid must be replaced upon its base." His manner was rather cheerful and cordial than otherwise. The expression of his mouth contradicted the sense of his



words. His nostrils had an odd way of distending themselves. In the corners of his eyes he had a little network of wrinkles, in which all sorts of dark thoughts seemed to meet together. It was here alone that the secret of his physiognomy could be thoroughly studied. His flat foot was a vulture's claw. His skull was low at the top and large about the temples. His ill-shapen ear, bristling with hair, seemed to say, "Beware of speaking to the beast in this cave."

One fine day in Guernsey, Rantaine was suddenly missing.

Lethierry's comrade had absconded, leaving the treasury of their partnership empty.

In this treasury there was some money of Rantaine's, no doubt, but there were also fifty thousand francs belonging to Lethierry.

Lethierry, by forty years of industry and probability as a coaster and ship-carpenter, had saved one hundred thousand francs. Rantaine robbed him of half the sum.

Half ruined, Lethierry did not lose heart, but began at once to think how to repair his misfortune. A stout heart may be ruined in fortune, but not in spirit. It was just about that time that people began to talk of the new kind of boat to be moved by steam-engines. Lethierry conceived the idea of trying Fulton's invention, so much disputed about; and by one of these fireboats to connect the Channel Islands with the French coast. He staked his all upon this idea; he devoted to it the wreck of his savings. Accordingly, six months after Rantaine's flight, the astonished people of St. Sampson beheld, issuing from the port, a vessel discharging huge volumes of smoke, and looking like a ship a-fire at sea. This was the first steam vessel to navigate the Channel.

This vessel, to which the people, in their dislike and contempt for novelty, immediately gave the nickname of "Lethierry's Galley," was announced as intended to maintain a constant communication between Guernsey and St. Malo.

#### IV.

##### CONTINUATION OF THE STORY OF UTOPIA.

It may be well imagined that the new enterprise did not prosper much at first. The owners of cutters passing between the island of Guernsey and the French coast were loud in their outcries. They denounced this attack upon the Holy Scriptures and their monopoly. The chapels began to fulminate against it. One reverend gentleman, named Elihu, stigmatized the new steam vessel as an "atheistical construction," and the sailing boat was declared the only orthodox craft. The people saw the horns of the devil among the beasts which the fireship carried to and fro. This storm of protest continued a considerable time. At last, however, it began to be perceived that these animals arrived less tired and sold better, their

meat being superior; that the sea risk was less also for passengers; that this mode of travelling was less expensive, shorter, and more sure; that they started at a fixed time, and arrived at a fixed time; that consignments of fish, travelling faster, arrived fresher, and that it was now possible to find a rent in the French markets for the surplus of great takes of fish so common in Guernsey. The butter, too, from the far-famed Guernsey cows, made the passage quicker in the "Devil Boat" than in the old sailing vessels, and lost nothing of its good quality, inasmuch that Dinan, in Brittany, became a customer for it, as well as St. Brieuc and Rennes. In short, thanks to what they called "Lethierry's Galley," the people enjoyed safe travelling, regular communication, prompt and easy passages to and fro, an increase of circulation, and an extension of markets and of commerce, and, finally, it was felt that it was necessary to patronize this "Devil Boat," which flew in the face of the Holy Scriptures, and brought wealth to the island. Some daring spirits even went so far as to express a positive satisfaction at it. Sieur Landoys, the registrar, bestowed his approval upon the vessel—an undoubted piece of impartiality on his part, as he did not like Lethierry. For, first of all, Lethierry was entitled to the dignity of "Mess," while Landoys was merely "Sieur Landoys." Then, although registrar of St. Pierre Port, Landoys was a parishioner of St. Sampson. Now there was not in the entire parish another man besides them devoid of prejudices. It seemed little enough, therefore, to indulge themselves with a detestation of each other. Two of a trade, says the proverb, rarely agree.

Sieur Landoys, however, had the honesty to support the steam-boat. Others followed Landoys. By little and little, these facts multiplied. The growth of opinion is like the rising tide. Time, and the continued and increasing success of the venture, with the evidence of real service rendered, and the improvement in the general welfare, gradually converted the people; and the day at length arrived when, with the exception of a few wiseacres, every one admired "Lethierry's Galley."

It would probably win less admiration now-a-days. This steam-boat of forty years since would doubtless provoke a smile among our modern boat-builders; for this marvel was ill-shaped, this prodigy was clumsy and infirm.

The distance between our grand Atlantic steam vessels of the present day and the boats with wheel-paddles which Denis Papin floated on the Fulda in 1707, is not greater than that between a three-decker, like the Montebello, 200 feet long, having a main yard of 115 feet, carrying a weight of 3000 tons, 1100 men, 120 guns, 10,000 cannon-balls, and 160 packages of canister, belching forth at every broadside, when in action, 3300 pounds of iron, and spreading to the wind, when it moves, 5600 square metres of canvas, and the old Danish galley of the second century, discovered, full of stone hatchets, and bows and clubs, in the mud of the sea-shore at

Wester-Satrup, and preserved at the Hôtel de Ville at Flensburg.

Exactly one hundred years—from 1707 to 1807—separate the first paddle-boat of Papin from the first steam-boat of Fulton. Lethierry's galley was assuredly a great improvement upon those two rough sketches; but it was itself only a sketch. For all that, it was a masterpiece in its way. Every scientific discovery in embryo presents that double aspect—a monster in the foetus, a marvel in the germ.

## V.

### SHE DEVIL BOAT.

"LETHIERRY'S GALLEY" was not masted with a view to sailing well; a fact which was not a defect; it is, indeed, one of the laws of naval construction. Besides, her motive power being steam, her sails were only accessory. A paddle steam-boat, moreover, is almost insensible to sails. The new steam vessel was too round, short, and thick-set. She had too much bow, and too great a breadth of quarter. The daring of inventors had not yet reached the point of making a steam vessel light. Lethierry's boat had some of the defects of Gilliat's Dutch sloop. She pitched very little, but she rolled a good deal. She had too much beam for her length. The massive machinery encumbered her, and, to make her capable of carrying a heavy cargo, her constructors had raised her bulwarks to an unusual height, giving to the vessel the defects of old seventy-fours, a bastard model which would have to be cut down to render them really seaworthy, or fit to go into action. Being short, she ought to have been able to veer quickly—the time employed in a manœuvre of that kind being in proportion to the length of the vessel—but her weight deprived her of the advantage of her shortness. Her midship frame was too broad, a fact which retarded her, the resistance of the sea being proportioned to the largest section below the water-line, and to the square of the speed. Her prow was vertical, which would not be regarded as a fault at the present day, but at that period this portion of the construction was invariably sloped at an angle of forty-five degrees. All the curving lines of the hull agreed well together. The rudder was the old-fashioned bar-rudder, not the wheeled one of the present time. Two skiffs, a species of *you-yous*, were suspended to the davits. The vessel had four anchors—the sheet anchor, the second or working anchor, and two bower anchors. These four anchors, slung by chains, were moved, according to the occasion, by the great capstan of the poop, or by the small capstan at the prow. At that period the pump-action windlass had not superseded the intermitting efforts of the old handspike. Having only two bower anchors, one on the starboard and the other on the larboard side, the vessel could not move conveniently in certain winds,

though she could aid herself at such times with the second anchor. Her speed was six knots an hour. When lying-to she rode well. Take her as she was, "Lethierry's Galley" was a good sea-boat; but people felt that, in moments of danger from reefs or water-spouts, she would be hardly manageable. Unhappily, her build made her roll about on the waves with a perpetual creaking like that of a new shoe.

She was, above all, a merchandise boat, and, like all ships built more for commerce than for fighting, was constructed exclusively with a view to stowage. She carried few passengers. The transport of cattle rendered stowage difficult and very peculiar. Vessels carried bullocks at that time in the hold, which was a complication of the difficulty. At the present day they are stowed on the fore-deck. The paddle-boxes of Lethierry's "Devil Boat" were painted white, the hull, down to the water-line, red, and all the rest of the vessel black, according to the somewhat ugly fashion of this century. When empty she drew seven feet of water, and when laden fourteen.

With regard to the engine, it was of considerable power. To speak exactly, its power was equal to that of one horse to every three tons burden, which is almost equal to that of a tug-boat. The paddles were well placed, a little in advance of the centre of gravity of the vessel. The maximum pressure of the engine was equal to two atmospheres. It consumed a great deal of coal, although it was constructed on the condensation and expansion principles. For that period the engine seemed, and indeed was, admirable. It had been constructed in France, at the works at Bercy. Mess Lethierry had roughly sketched it; the engineer who had constructed it in accordance with his diagram was dead, so that the engine was unique, and probably could not have been replaced. The designer still lived, but the constructor was no more.

The engine had cost forty thousand francs.

Lethierry had himself constructed the "Devil Boat" upon the great covered stocks by the side of the first tower between St. Pierre Port and St. Sampson. He had been to Brème to buy the wood. All his skill as a shipwright was exhausted in its construction; his ingenuity might be seen in the planks, the seams of which were straight and even, and covered with sarangousti, an Indian mastic, better than resin. The sheathing was well beaten. To remedy the roundness of the hull, Lethierry had fitted out a boom at the bowsprit, which allowed him to add a false spritail to the regular one. On the day of the launch, he cried aloud, "At last I am afloat!" The vessel was successful, in fact, as the reader has already learnt.

Either by chance or design she had been launched on the 14th of July, the anniversary of the taking of the Bastille. On that day, mounted upon the bridge between the two paddle-boxes, looked Lethierry upon the sea, and exclaimed, "It is your turn now! The Parisians took the Bastille, now sciences take the sea."



Lethierry's boat made the voyage from Guernsey to St. Malo once a week. She started on the Tuesday morning, and returned on the Friday evening, in time for the Saturday market. She was a stronger craft than any of the largest coasting sloops in all the archipelago, and her capacity being in proportion to her dimensions, one of her voyages was equal to four voyages of an ordinary boat in the same trade; hence they were very profitable. The reputation of a vessel depends on its stowage, and Lethierry was an admirable superintendent of cargo. When he was no longer able to work himself, he trained up a sailor to undertake this duty. At the end of two years, the steam-boat brought in a clear seven hundred and fifty pounds sterling a-year, or eighteen thousand francs. The pound sterling of Guernsey is worth twenty-four francs only; that of England twenty-five, and that of Jersey twenty-six. These differences are less unimportant than they seem; the banks, at all events, know how to turn them to advantage.

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## VI.

### LETHIERRY'S EXALTATION.

THE "Devil Boat" prospered. Mess Lethierry began to look forward to the time when he should be called "Monsieur." At Guernsey, people do not become "monsieurs" at one bound. Between the plain man and the gentleman there is quite a scale to climb. To begin with, we have the simple name, plain "Peter," let us suppose; the second step is "Neighbour Peter;" the third, "Father Peter;" the fourth, "Sieur Peter;" the fifth, "Mess Peter;" and then we reach the summit in "Monsieur Peter."

This scale, ascending thus from the ground, is carried to still greater heights. All the upper classes of England join on and continue it. Here are the various steps, becoming more and more glorious. Above the Monsieur, or "Mr.," there is the "Esquire;" above the esquire, the knight; above the knight, then still rising, we have the baronet, the Scotch laird, the baron, the viscount, the earl (called count in France, and jarl in Norway); the marquis, the duke, the prince of the blood royal, and the king: so by degrees we ascend from the people to the middle class, from the middle class to the baronetage, from the baronetage to the peerage, from the peerage to royalty.

Thanks to his successful ingenuity, thanks to steam, and his engines, and the "Devil Boat," Mess Lethierry was fast becoming an important personage. When building his vessel he had been compelled to borrow money. He had become indebted at Brême, he had become indebted at St. Malo; but every year he diminished his obligations.

He had moreover purchased on credit at the very entrance to the port of St. Sampson a pretty stone-built house, entirely new, situate between the sea and a pretty garden. On the

corner of this house was inscribed the name of the "Bravées." Its front formed a part of the wall of the port itself, and it was remarkable for a double row of windows: on the north, alongside a little enclosure filled with flowers, and on the south commanding a view of the ocean. It had thus two *facades*, one open to the tempest and the sea, the other looking into a garden filled with roses.

These two frontages seemed made for the two inmates of the house—Mess Lethierry and Déruchette.

The "Bravées" was popular at St. Sampson, for Mess Lethierry had at length become a popular man. This popularity was due partly to his good nature, his devotedness, and his courage; partly to the number of lives he had saved; and a great deal to his success, and to the fact that he had awarded to St. Sampson the honour of being the port of the departure and arrival of the new steam-boat. Having made the discovery that the "Devil Boat" was decidedly a success, St. Pierre, the capital, desired to obtain it for that port, but Lethierry held fast to St. Sampson. It was his native town. "It was there that I was first pitched into the water," he used to say; hence his great local popularity. His position as a small landed proprietor paying land-tax, made him, what they call in Guernsey, an *inhabitant*. He was chosen land-tax assessor. The poor sailor had mounted five out of six steps of the Guernsey social scale; he had attained the dignity of "Mess;" he was rapidly approaching the Monsieur; and who could predict whether he might not even rise higher than that; who could say that they might not one day find in the almanack of Guernsey, under the heading of "Nobility and Gentry," the astonishing and superb inscription, — *Lethierry, Esq.*

But Mess Lethierry had nothing of vanity in his nature, or he had no sense of it; or if he had, disdained it: to know that he was useful was his greatest pleasure; to be popular touched him less than being necessary; he had, as we have already said, only two objects of delight, and consequently only two ambitions: Durande and Déruchette.

However this may have been, he had embarked in the lottery of the sea, and had gained the chief prize.

This chief prize was the Durande steaming away in all her pride.

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## VII.

### THE SAME GODFATHER AND THE SAME PATRON SAINT.

HAVING created his steam-boat, Lethierry had christened it; he had called it *Durande*—"La Durande." We will speak of her henceforth by no other name: we will claim the liberty also, in spite of typographical usage, of not underlining this name Durande; conforming in

this to the notion of Mess Lethierry, in whose eyes La Durande was almost a living person.

Durande and Deruchette are the same name. Deruchette is the diminutive.

This diminutive is very common in France.

In the country the names of saints are often endowed with all these diminutives as well as all their augmentatives. One might suppose there were several persons when there is, in fact, only one. This system of patrons and patronesses under different names is by no means rare. Lise, Lisette, Lisa, Elisa, Isabelle, Lisbeth, Betsy, all these are simply Elizabeth. It is probable that Mahout, Maclou, Malo, and Magloire are the same saint: this, however, we do not vouch for.

Saint Durande is a saint of l'Angoumois and of the Charente; whether she is an orthodox member of the calendar is a question for the Bollandists: orthodox or not, she has been made the patron saint of numerous chapels.

It was while Lethierry was a young sailor at Rochefort that he had made the acquaintance of this saint, probably in the person of some pretty Charantaise, perhaps in that of the grissette with the pretty nails. The saint had remained sufficiently in his memory for him to give the name to the two things which he loved most—Durande to the steam-boat, Deruchette to the girl.

Of one he was the father, of the other the uncle.

Deruchette was the daughter of a brother who had died: she was an orphan child: he had adopted her, and had taken the place both of father and mother.

Deruchette was not only his niece, she was his godchild; he had held her in his arms at the baptismal font; it was he who had chosen her patron saint, Durande, and her Christian name, Deruchette.

Deruchette, as we have said, was born at St. Pierre Port. Her name was inscribed at its date on the register of the parish.

As long as the niece was a child, and the uncle poor, nobody took heed of her appellation of Deruchette, but when the little girl became a miss, and the sailor a gentleman, Deruchette shocked the feelings of Guernsey society; the uncouthness of the name astonished every one. Folks asked Mess Lethierry "why Deruchette?" he answered, "It is a very good name in its way." Several attempts were made to get him to obtain a change in the baptismal name, but he would be no party to them. One day a fine lady of the upper circle of society in St. Sampson, the wife of a rich retired iron-founder, said to Mess Lethierry, "In future I shall call your daughter Nancy."

"If names of country towns are in fashion," said he, "why not Lons le Saulnier?" The fine lady did not yield her point, and on the morrow said, "We are determined not to have it Deruchette. I have found for your daughter a pretty name—*Marianne*." "A very pretty name, indeed," replied Mess Lethierry, "com-

posed of two words which signify a husband and an ass."\* He held fast to Deruchette.

It would be a mistake to infer from Lethierry's pun that he had no wish to see his niece married. He desired to marry her, certainly; but in his own way: he intended her to have a husband after his own heart—one who would work hard, and whose wife would have little to do. He liked rough hands in a man, and delicate ones in a woman. To prevent Deruchette spoiling her pretty hands he had always brought her up like a young lady; he had provided her with a music-master, a piano, a little library, and a few needles and threads in a pretty workbasket: she was, indeed, more often reading than stitching, more often playing than reading; this was as Mess Lethierry wished it; to be charming was all that he expected of her: he had reared the young girl like a flower. Whoever has studied the character of sailors well understand this—rude and hard in their nature, they have an odd partiality for grace and delicacy. To realize the idea of the uncle, the niece ought to have been rich—so, indeed, felt Mess Lethierry. His steam-boat voyaged for this end. The mission of Durande was to provide a marriage portion for Deruchette.

## VIII.

BONNIE DUNDEE.

DÉRUCLETTE occupied the prettiest room at the Bravées; it had two windows, was furnished with various articles made of fine-grained mahogany, had a bed with four curtains, green and white, and looked out upon the garden, and beyond it towards the high hill on which stands the Chateau du Valle. Gilliatt's house, the *Bû de la Rue*, was on the other side of this hill.

Deruchette had her music and piano in this chamber; she accompanied herself on the instrument when singing the air which she preferred—the melancholy Scottish air of "Bonnie Dundee." The very spirit of night breathes in this melody, but her voice was full of the freshness of dawn. The contrast was quaint and pleasing; people said, "Miss Deruchette at her piano."

The passers by the foot of the hill stopped sometimes before the wall of the garden of the Bravées to listen to that sweet voice and plaintive song.

Deruchette was the very embodiment of joy as she went to and fro in the house; she brought with her a perpetual spring. She was beautiful, but more pretty than beautiful, and still more graceful than pretty. She recalled to the good old pilots, friends of Mess Lethierry, that princess in the song which the soldiers and sailors sing, who was so beautiful—

"Qu'elle passait pour telle dans le régiment."

Mess Lethierry used to say, "She has a head of hair like a ship's cable."

\* A play upon the French words *maré* and *âne*.



From her infancy she had been remarkable for beauty. The learned in such matters had grave doubts about her nose, but the little one having probably determined to be pretty, had finally satisfied their requirements. She grew to girlhood without any serious loss of beauty; her nose became neither too long nor too short; and, when grown up, her critics admitted her to be charming.

She never addressed her uncle otherwise than as father.

Lethierry allowed her to soil her fingers a little in gardening, and even in some kind of household duties: she watered her beds of pink hollyhocks, purple foxgloves, perennial phloxes, and scarlet herb bennets. She took good advantage of the climate of Guernsey, so favourable to flowers. She had, like many other persons there, aloes in the open ground, and, what is more difficult, she succeeded in cultivating the Nepaulese cinquefoil. Her little kitchen-garden was scientifically arranged; she was able to produce from it several kinds of rare vegetables. She sowed Dutch cauliflower and Brussels cabbages, which she thinned out in July, turnips for August, endive for September, short parsnip for the autumn, and rampions for winter. Mess Lethierry did not interfere with her in this, so long as she did not handle the spade and rake too much, or meddle with the coarser kinds of garden labour. He had provided her with two servants, one named Grace, and the other Douce, which are favourite names in Guernsey. Grace and Douce did the hard work of the house and garden, and they had the right to have red hands.

With regard to Mess Lethierry, his room was a little retreat with a view over the port, and communicating with the great lower room of the ground floor, on which was situated the door of the house, near which the various staircases met.

His room was furnished with his hammock, his chronometer, and his pipe; there were also a table and a chair. The ceiling had been whitewashed, as well as the four walls. A fine marine map, bearing the inscription *W. Faden*, 5 Charing Cross, Geographer to his Majesty, and representing the Channel Islands, was nailed up at the side of the door, and on the left, stretched out and fastened with other nails, appeared one of those large cotton handkerchiefs, on which are printed in colours the signals of all countries in the world, having at the four corners the standards of France, Russia, Spain, and the United States, and in the centre the union jack of England.

Douce and Grace were two faithful creatures within certain limits. Douce was good-natured enough, and Grace was probably good-looking. Douce was unmarried, had secretly "a gallant." In the Channel Islands the word is common, as indeed is the fact itself. The two girls regarded as servants had something of the Creole in their character, a sort of slowness in their movements, not out of keeping

with the Norman spirit pervading the relations of servant and master in the Channel Islands. Grace, coquettish and good-looking, was always scanning the future with a nervous anxiety. This arose from the fact of her not only having, like Douce, "a gallant," but also, as the scandal-loving averred, a sailor husband, whose return one day was a thing she dreaded. This, however, does not concern us. In a household less austere and less innocent, Douce would have continued to be the servant, but Grace would have become the *soubrette*. The dangerous talents of Grace were lost upon a young mistress so pure and good as Déruchette. For the rest, the intrigues of Douce and Grace were cautiously concealed. Mess Lethierry knew nothing of such matters, and no token of them had ever reached Déruchette.

The lower room of the ground floor, a hall with a large fireplace, and surrounded with benches and tables, had served in the last century as a meeting-place for a conventicle of French Protestant refugees. The sole ornament of the bare stone wall was a sheet of parchment, set in a frame of black wood, on which were represented some of the charitable deeds of the great Bossuet, Bishop of Meaux. Some poor diocesan of this famous orator, sur-named the "Eagle," persecuted by him at the time of the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes, and driven to take shelter at Guernsey, had hung this picture on the wall to preserve the remembrance of these facts. The spectator who had the patience to decipher a rude handwriting in faded ink might have learnt the following facts, which are but little known: "29th October, 1685, Monsieur the Bishop of Meaux appeals to the king to destroy the temples of Moreef and Nanteuil."—"2d April, 1686, Arrest of Cochard, father and son, for their religious opinions, at the request of Monsieur the Bishop of Meaux. Released: the Cochards having recanted."—"28th October, 1699, Monsieur the Bishop of Meaux sent to Mde. Pontchartrain a petition of remonstrance, pointing out that it will be necessary to place the young ladies named Chalandes and De Neuville, who are of the reformed religion, in the House of the 'New Catholics' at Paris."—"7th July, 1703, the king's order executed as requested by Monsieur the Bishop of Meaux for shutting up in an asylum Baudouin and his wife, two bad Catholics of Fublaines."

At the end of the hall, near the door of Mess Lethierry's room, was a little corner with a wooden partition, which had been the Huguenots' sanctum, and had become, thanks to its row of rails and a small hole to pass paper or money through, the steam-boat office; that is to say, the office of the Durande, kept by Mess Lethierry in person. Upon the old oaken reading-desk, where once rested the Holy Bible, lay a great ledger, with its alternate pages headed Dr. and Cr.

## IX.

## THE MAN WHO DISCOVERED RANTAINÉ'S CHARACTER.

As long as Mess Lethierry had been able to do duty, he had commanded the *Durande*, and had had no other pilot or captain but himself; but a time had come, as we have said, when he had been compelled to find a successor. He had chosen for that purpose *Sieur Clubin*, of *Torteval*, a taciturn man. *Sieur Clubin* had a character upon the coast for strict probity. He became the *alter ego*, the double of Mess Lethierry.

*Sieur Clubin*, although he had rather the look of a notary than of a sailor, was a mariner of rare skill. He had all the talents which are required to meet dangers of every kind. He was a skilful stower, a safe man aloft, an able and careful boatswain, a powerful steersman, an experienced pilot, and a bold captain. He was prudent, and he carried his prudence sometimes to the point of daring, which is a great quality at sea. His natural apprehensiveness of danger was tempered by a strong instinct of what was possible in an emergency. He was one of those mariners who will face risks to a point perfectly well known to themselves, who generally manage to come successfully out of every peril. Every certainty which a man can command, dealing with so fickle an element as the sea, he possessed. *Sieur Clubin*, moreover, was a renowned swimmer; he was one of that race of men broken in to the buffeting of the waves, who can remain as long as they please in the water—who can start from the *Havre-des-Nas* at *Jersey*, double the *Colettes*, swim round the *Hermitage* and *Castle Elizabeth*, and return in two hours to the point from which they started. He came from *Torteval*, where he had the reputation of often having swam across the passage so much dreaded, from the *Hanway Rocks* to the point of *Pleinmort*.

One circumstance which had recommended *Sieur Clubin* to Mess Lethierry more than any other was his having judged correctly the character of *Rantaine*. He had pointed out to Lethierry the dishonesty of the man, and had said "Rantaine will rob you." His prediction was verified. More than once—in matters, it is true, not very important—Mess Lethierry had put his ever scrupulous honesty to the proof; and he freely communicated with him on the subject of his affairs. Mess Lethierry used to say, "A good conscience expects to be treated with perfect confidence."

## X.

## LONG YARNS.

MESS LETHIERRY, for the sake of his own ease, always wore his sea-faring clothes, and preferred his tarpauling overcoat to his pilot jacket. *Déruchette* felt vexed occasionally

about this peculiarity. Nothing is prettier than a pouting beauty. She laughed and scolded. "My dear father," she would say, "what a smell of pitch!" and she would give him a gentle tap upon his broad shoulders.

This good old seaman had gathered from his voyages many wonderful stories. He had seen at *Madagascar* birds' feathers, three of which sufficed to make a roof of a house. He had seen in *India* field sorrel, the stalks of which were nine inches high. In *New Holland* he had seen troops of turkeys and geese led about and guarded by a bird, like a flock by a shepherd's dog: this bird was called the *Agami*. He had visited elephants' cemeteries. In *Africa*, he had encountered gorillas, a terrible species of man-monkey. He knew the ways of all the ape tripe, from the wild dog-faced monkey, which he called the *Macaco-bravo*, to the howling monkey or *Macaco-barbado*. In *Chili*, he had seen a pouched monkey move the compassion of the huntsman by showing its little one. He had seen in *California* a hollow trunk of a tree fall to the ground, so vast that a man on horseback could ride one hundred paces inside. In *Morocco*, he had seen the *Mozabites* and the *Biskris* fighting with *matraks* and bars of iron—the *Biskris*, because they had been called *kelbs*, which means dogs; and the *Mozabites*, because they had been treated as *klamsi*, which means people of the fifth sect. He had seen in *China* the pirate *Chanh-thong-quan-larh-Quoi* cut to pieces for having assassinated the *Ap* of a village. At *Thu-dan-mot*, he had seen a lion carry off an old woman in the open marketplace. He was present at the arrival of the *Great Serpent* brought from *Canton* to *Saigon* to celebrate in the pagoda of *Cho-len* the fête of *Quan-nam*, the goddess of navigators. He had beheld the great *Quan-Sû* among the *Moi*. At *Rio de Janeiro*, he had seen the *Brazilian ladies* in the evening put little balls of gauze into their hair, each containing a beautiful kind of firefly; the whole forming a head-dress of little twinkling lights. He had combated in *Paraguay* with swarms of enormous ants and spiders, big and downy as an infant's head, and compassing with their long legs a third of a yard, and attacking men by pricking them with their bristles, which enter the skin as sharp as arrows, and raise painful blisters. On the river *Arinos*, a tributary of the *Tocantins*, in the virgin forests to the north of *Diamantina*,\* he had determined the existence of the famous bat-shaped people, the *Murcilagos*, or men who are born with white hair and red eyes, who lived in the shady solitudes of the woods, sleep by day, awake by night, and fish and hunt in the dark, seeing better than by the light of the moon. He told how, near *Beyrout*, once in an encampment of an expedition of which he formed part, a rain gauge belonging to one of the party happened to be stolen from a tent. A wizard, wearing two or three strips of leather only, and

\* The reader need hardly be informed that these are imaginary places.—TRANS.



looking like a man having nothing on but his braces, thereupon rang a bell at the end of a horn so violently, that a hyena finally answered the summons by bringing back the missing instrument. The hyena was, in fact, the thief. These veritable histories bore a strong resemblance to fictions; but they amused Déruchette.

The *poupée* or "doll" of the Durande, as the people of the Channel Islands call the figure-head of a ship, was the connecting link between the vessel and Lethierry's niece.

The *poupée* of the Durande was particularly dear to Mess Lethierry. He had instructed the carver to make it resemble Déruchette. It looked like a rude attempt to cut out a face with a hatchet. It was like a clumsy log trying hard to look like a girl.

This unshapely block produced a great effect upon Mess Lethierry's imagination. He looked upon it with an almost superstitious admiration. His faith in it was complete. He was able to trace in it an excellent resemblance to Déruchette. Thus the dogma resembles the truth, and the idol the deity.

Mess Lethierry had two grand fête-days in every week; one was Tuesday, the other Friday. His first delight consisted in seeing the Durande weigh anchor; his second in seeing her enter the port again. He leaned upon his elbows at the window contemplating his work, and was happy.

On Fridays, the presence of Mess Lethierry at his window was a signal. When people passing the Bravées saw him lighting his pipe, they said, "Ay! the steam-boat is in sight." One kind of smoke was the herald of the other.

The Durande, when she entered the port, made her cable fast to a huge iron ring under Mess Lethierry's window, and fixed in the basement of the house. On those nights, Lethierry slept soundly in his hammock, with a soothing consciousness of the presence of Déruchette asleep in her room near him, and of the Durande moored opposite.

The moorings of the Durande were close to the bell of the port. A little strip of quay passed thence before the door of the Bravées.

The quay, the Bravées, and its house, the garden, the alleys bordered with edges, and the greater part even of the surrounding houses, no longer exist. The demand for Guernsey granite has invaded these too. The whole of this part of the town is now occupied by stone-cutters' yards.

## XI.

### MATRIMONIAL PROSPECTS.

DÉRUCHETTE was approaching womanhood, and was still unmarried.

Mess Lethierry, in bringing her up to have white hands, had also rendered her somewhat fastidious. A training of that kind has its disadvantages; but Lethierry was himself still more fastidious. He would have liked to have pro-

vided at the same time for both his idols; to have so found in the guide and companion of the one a commander for the other. What is a husband? The pilot on the voyage of matrimony. Why not the same conductor for the vessel and for the girl? The affairs of a household have their tides, their ebbs and flows, and he who knows how to steer a bark ought to know how to guide a woman's destiny, subject as both are to the influences of the moon and the wind. Sieur Clubin, being only fifteen years younger than Lethierry, would necessarily be only a provisional master for the Durande. It would be necessary to find a young captain, a permanent master, a true successor of the founder, inventor, and creator of the first Channel steam-boat. A captain for the Durande who should come up to his ideal would have been almost a son-in-law in Lethierry's eyes. Why not make him a son-in-law in a double sense? The idea pleased him. The husband *in posse* of Déruchette haunted his dreams. His ideal was a powerful seaman, tanned and browned by weather, a sea Athlete. This, however, was not exactly the ideal of Déruchette. Her dreams, if dreams they could even be called, were of a more ethereal character.

The uncle and the niece were at all events agreed in not being in haste to seek a solution of these problems. When Déruchette began to be regarded as a probable heiress, a crowd of suitors had presented themselves. Attentions under these circumstances are not generally worth much. Mess Lethierry felt this. He would grumble out the old French proverb, "*A maiden of gold, a suitor of brass.*" He politely showed the fortune-seekers to the door. He was content to wait, and so was Déruchette.

It was, perhaps, a singular fact that he had little *penchant* for the local aristocracy. In that respect Mess Lethierry showed himself not entirely English. It will hardly be believed that he even refused for Déruchette a Ganduel of Jersey, and a Bugnet-Nicolin of Sark. People were bold enough to affirm, although we doubt if this were possible, that he had even declined the proposals of a member of the family of Edou, which is evidently descended from "Edou-ard" (Anglicé Edward) the Confessor.

## XII.

### AN ANOMALY IN THE CHARACTER OF LETHIERRY.

MESS LETHIERRY had a failing, and a serious one. He detested a priest; though not as an individual, but as an institution. Reading one day—for he used to read—in a work of Voltaire—for he would even read Voltaire—the remark that priests "have something cat-like in their nature," he laid down the book, and was heard to mutter, "Then I suppose I have something dog-like in mine."

It must be recollected that the priests—Lutheran and Calvinist, as well as Catholic—had

vigorously combated the new "Devil Boat, and had persecuted its inventor. To be a sort of revolutionist in the art of navigation, to introduce a spirit of progress in the Norman archipelago, to disturb the peace of the poor little island of Guernsey with a new invention, was, in their eyes, as we have not concealed from the reader, an abominable and most condemnable rashness. Nor had they omitted to condemn it pretty loudly. It must not be forgotten that we are now speaking of the Guernsey clergy of a bygone generation, very different from that of the present time, who in almost all the local places of worship display a laudable sympathy with progress. They had embarrassed Lethierry in a hundred ways; every sort of resisting force which can be found in sermons and discourses had been employed against him. Detested by the churchmen, he naturally came to detest them in his turn. Their hatred was the extenuating circumstance to be taken into account in judging of his.

But it must be confessed that his dislike for priests was, in some degree, in his very nature. It was hardly necessary for them to hate him in order to inspire him with aversion. As he said, he moved among them like the dog among cats. He had an antipathy to them, not only in idea, but in what is more difficult to analyse, his instincts. He felt their secret claws, and showed his teeth; sometimes, it must be confessed, a little at random and out of season. It is a mistake to make no distinctions: a dislike in the mass is a prejudice. The good Savoyard curé would have found no favour in his eyes. It is not certain that a worthy priest was even a possible thing in Lethierry's mind. His philosophy was carried so far that his good sense sometimes abandoned him. There is such a thing as the intolerance of tolerants, as well as the violence of moderates. But Lethierry was at bottom too good-natured to be a thorough hater. He did not attack so much as avoid. He kept the church people at a distance. He suffered evil at their hands, but he confined himself to not wishing them any good. The shade of difference, in fact, between his aversion and theirs, lay in the fact that they bore animosity, while he had only a strong antipathy. Small as is the island of Guernsey, it has, unfortunately, plenty of room for differences of religion; there, to take the broad distinction, is the Catholic faith and the Protestant faith: every form of worship has its temple or chapel. In Germany, at Heidelberg, for example, people are not so particular; they divide a church in two, one half for Saint Peter, the other half for Calvin, and between the two is a partition to prevent religious variances terminating in fisticuffs. The shares are equal; the Catholics have three altars, the Huguenots three altars. As the services are at the same hours, one bell summons both denominations to prayers; it rings, in fact, both for God and for Satan, according as each pleases to regard it. Nothing can be more simple.

The phlegmatic character of the Germans favours, I suppose, this peculiar arrangement, but in Guernsey every religion has its own domicile; there is the orthodox parish and the heretic parish; the individual may choose. "Neither one nor the other" was the choice of Mess Lethierry.

This sailor, workman, philosopher, and parvenu trader, though a simple man in appearance, was by no means simple at bottom. He had his opinions and his prejudices. On the subject of the priests he was immovable; he would have entered the lists with Montlosier.

Occasionally he indulged in rather disrespectful jokes upon this subject. He had certain odd expressions thereupon peculiar to himself, but significant enough. Going to confession he called "combing one's conscience." The little learning that he had—a certain amount of reading picked up here and there between the squalls at sea—did not prevent his making blunders in spelling. He made also mistakes in pronunciation, some of which, however, gave a double sense to his words, which might have been suspected of a sly intention.

Though he was a strong anti-papist, that circumstance was far from conciliating the Anglicans. He was no more liked by the Protestant rectors than by the Catholic curés. The enunciation of the gravest dogmas did not prevent his anti-theological temper bursting forth. Accident, for example, having once brought him to hear a sermon on eternal punishment by the Reverend Jaquemin Hérode—a magnificent discourse, filled from one end to the other with sacred texts, proving the everlasting pains, the tortures, the torments, the perditions, the inexorable chastisements, the burnings without end, the inextinguishable maledictions, the wrath of the Almighty, the celestial fury, the divine vengeance, and other incontestable realities—he was heard to say as he was going out in the midst of the faithful flock, "You see, I have an odd notion of my own on this matter; I imagine God as a merciful being."

This leaven of atheism was doubtless due to his sojourn in France.

Although a Guernsey man of pure extraction, he was called in the island "the Frenchman;" but chiefly on account of his "improper" manner of speaking. He did not indeed conceal the truth from himself. He was impregnated with ideas subversive of established institutions. His obstinacy in constructing the "Devil Boat" had proved that. He used to say, "I have a little of '89 in my head." A doubtful sort of avowal. These were not his only indiscretions. In France "to preserve appearances," in England "to be respectable," is the chief condition of a quiet life. To be respectable implies a multitude of little observances, from the strict keeping of Sunday down to the careful tying of a cravat. "To act so that nobody may point at you"—this is the terrible social law. To be pointed at with the finger is almost the same thing as an anathematization. Little towns, always hot-beds of gossip, are remarkable for that



isolating malignancy, which is like the tremendous malediction of the Church seen through the wrong end of the telescope. The bravest are afraid of this ordeal. They are ready to confront the storm, the fire of cannon, but they shrink at the glance of "Mrs. Grundy." Mess Lethierry was more obstinate than logical; but under pressure even his obstinacy would bend. He put—to use another of his phrases, eminently suggestive of latent compromises not always pleasant to avow—"a little water in his wine." He kept aloof from the clergy, but he did not absolutely close his door against them. On official occasions, and at the customary epochs of pastoral visits, he received with sufficiently good grace both the Lutheran rector and the Papist chaplain. He had even, though at distant intervals, accompanied Déruchette to the Anglican parish church, to which Déruchette herself, as we have said, only went on the four great festivals of the year.

On the whole, these little concessions, which always cost him a pang, irritated him; and, far from inclining him towards the church people, only increased his inward disinclination for them. He compensated himself by more railery. His nature, in general so devoid of bitterness, had no uncharitable side except this. To alter him, however, was impossible.

In fact, this was in his very temperament, and was beyond his own power to control.

Every sort of priest or clergyman was distasteful to him. He had a little of the old revolutionary want of reverence. He did not distinguish between one form of worship and another. He did not do justice to that great step in the progress of ideas, the denial of the real presence. His shortsightedness in these matters even prevented his perceiving any essential difference between a minister and an abbé. A reverend doctor and a reverend father were pretty nearly the same to him. He used to say, "Wesley is not a bit more to my taste than Loyola." When he saw a reverend pastor walking with his wife, he would turn to look at them, and mutter "a married priest," in a tone which brought out all the absurdity which those words had in the ears of Frenchmen at that time. He used to relate how on his last voyage to England he had seen the "Bishopess" of London. His dislike for marriages of that sort amounted almost to disgust. "Gown and gown do not mate well," he would say. The sacerdotal function was to him in the nature of a distinct sex. It would have been natural to him to have said, "Neither a man nor a woman, only a priest;" and he had the bad taste to apply to the Anglican and the Roman Catholic clergy the same disdainful epithets. He confounded the two cassocks in the same phraseology. He did not take the trouble to vary in favour of Catholics or Lutherans, or whatever they might be, the figures of speech common among military men of that period. He would say to Déruchette, "Marry whom you please, provided you do not marry a parson."

## XIII.

## THOUGHTLESSNESS ADDS A GRACE TO BEAUTY.

A WORD once said, Mess Lethierry remembered it; a word once said, Déruchette soon forgot it. Here was another difference between the uncle and the niece.

Brought up in the peculiar way already described, Déruchette was little accustomed to responsibility. There is a latent danger in an education not sufficiently serious, which cannot be too much insisted on. It is perhaps unwise to endeavour to make a child happy too soon.

So long as she was happy, Déruchette thought all was well. She knew, too, that it was always a pleasure to her uncle to see her pleased. The religious sentiment in her nature was satisfied with going to the parish church four times in the year. We have seen her in her Christmas-day toilette. Of life she was entirely ignorant. She had a disposition which one day might lead her to love passionately. Meanwhile she was contented.

She sang by fits and starts, chatted by fits and starts, enjoyed the hour as it passed, fulfilled some little duty, and was gone again, and was delightful in all. Add to all this the English sort of liberty which she enjoyed. In England the rosy infants go alone; girls are their own mistresses, and adolescence is almost wholly unrestrained. Such are the differences of manners. Later, how many of these free maidens become female slaves? We used the word in its least odious sense; we mean that they are free in the development of their nature, but slaves to duty.

Déruchette awoke every morning with little thought of her actions of the day before. It would have troubled her a good deal to have had to give an account of how she had spent her time the previous week. All this, however, did not prevent her having certain hours of strange disquietude: times when some dark cloud seemed to pass over the brightness of her joy. Those azure depths are subject to such shadows! But clouds like these soon passed away. She quickly shook off such moods with a cheerful laugh, knowing neither why she had been sad, nor why she had regained her serenity. She was always at play. As a child, she would take delight in teasing the passers-by. She played practical jokes upon the boys. If the fiend himself had passed that way, she would hardly have spared him some ingenious trick. She was pretty and innocent; and she could abuse the immunity accorded to such qualities. She was ready with a smile as a cat with a stroke of her claws. So much the worse for the victim of her scratches. She thought no more of them. Yesterday had no existence for her. She lived in the fullness of to-day. Such it is to have too much happiness fall to one's lot! With Déruchette impressions vanished like the melted snow.

## BOOK IV.

### THE BAGPIPE.

#### I.

##### STREAKS OF FIRE IN THE HORIZON.

GILLIATT had never spoken to Déruchette; he knew her from having seen her at a distance, as men know the morning star.

At the period when Déruchette had met Gilliatt on the road leading from St. Peter's Port to Valle, and had surprised him by tracing his name in the snow, she was just sixteen years of age. Only the evening before Mess Lethierry had said to her, "Come, no more childish tricks; you are a great girl."

That word, "Gilliatt," written by the young maiden, had sunk into an unfathomed depth.

What were women to Gilliatt? He could not have answered that question himself. When he met one he generally inspired her with something of the timidity which he felt himself; he never spoke to a woman except from urgent necessity. He had never played the part of a "gallant" to any one of the country girls. When he found himself alone on the road, and perceived a woman coming towards him, he would climb over a fence or bury himself in some copse; he even avoided old women. Once in his life he had seen a Parisian lady. A *Parisienne* on the wing was a strange event in Guernsey at that distant epoch; and Gilliatt had heard this gentle lady relate her little troubles in these words: "I am very much annoyed; I have got some spots of rain upon my bonnet. Pale buff is a shocking colour for rain." Having found, some time afterwards, between the leaves of a book, an old engraving representing "a lady of the Chaussée d'Antin" in full dress, he had stuck it against the wall at home as a souvenir of this remarkable apparition.

On that Christmas morning when he had met Déruchette, and when she had written his name and disappeared laughing, he returned home scarcely conscious of why he had gone out. That night he slept little: he was dreaming of a thousand things—that it would be well to cultivate black radishes in the garden; that he had not seen the boat from Sark pass by; had anything happened to it? Then he remembered that he had seen the white stonecrop in flower, a rare thing at that season. He had never known exactly who was the woman who had reared him, and he made up his mind that she must have been his mother, and thought of her with redoubled tenderness. He called to mind the lady's clothing in the old leathern trunk. He thought that the Reverend Jaquemin Hérode would probably one day or other be appointed Dean of St. Peter's Port and Surrogate of the Bishop, and that the rectory of St. Sampson would become vacant. Next he remembered

that the morrow of Christmas would be the twenty-seventh day of the moon, and that consequently high-water would be at twenty-one minutes past three, the half-ebb at a quarter past seven, low-water at thirty-three minutes past nine, and half-flood at thirty-nine minutes past twelve. He recalled, in their most trifling details, the costume of the Highlander who had sold him the bagpipe: his bonnet with a thistle ornament, his claymore, his close-fitting short jacket, his kilt and philabeg ornamented, with a pocket and his snuff-horn, his pin set with a Scottish stone, his two girdles, his sash and belts, his sword, cutlass, dirk, and skene-dhu; his black-sheathed knife with its black handle ornamented with two cairngorms, and the bare knees of the soldier; his socks, gaiters, and buckled shoes. This highly-equipped figure became a spectre in his imagination, which pursued him with a sense of feverishness as he sunk into oblivion. When he awoke it was full daylight, and his first thought was of Déruchette.

The next night he slept more soundly, but he was dreaming again of the Scottish soldier. In the midst of his sleep he remembered that the after-Christmas sittings of the Chief Law Court would commence on the 21st of January. He dreamed also about the Reverend Jaquemin Hérode. He thought of Déruchette, and seemed to be in violent anger with her; he wished he had been a child again to throw stones at her windows; then he thought that if he were a child again he should have his mother by his side, and he began to sob.

Gilliatt had a project at this time of going to pass three months at Chousey, or at the Miriquiers; but he did not go.

He walked no more along the road to St. Peter's Port.

He had an odd fancy that his name of "Gilliatt" had remained there traced upon the ground, and that the passers-by had stopped there to read it.

#### II.

##### THE UNKNOWN WORLD UNFOLDS ITSELF BY DEGREES.

On the other hand, Gilliatt had the satisfaction of seeing the Bravées every day. By some accident he was always passing that way. His business seemed always to lead him by the path which passed under the wall of Déruchette's garden.

One morning, as he was walking along this path, he heard a market-woman who was returning from the Bravées say to another, "Mess Lethierry is fond of sea-kale."



He dug in his garden of the *Bû de la Rue* a trench for sea-kale. The sea-kale is a vegetable which has a flavour like asparagus.

The wall of the garden of the *Bravées* was very low; it would have been easy to scale it. The idea of scaling it would have appeared to him terrible. But there was nothing to hinder his hearing, as any one else might, the voices of persons talking as he passed, in the rooms or in the garden. He did not listen, but he heard them. Once he could distinguish the voices of the two servants, Grace and Douce, disputing. It was a sound which belonged to the house, and their quarrel remained in his ears like the remembrance of music.

On another occasion, he distinguished a voice which was different, and which seemed to him to be the voice of *Déruchette*. He quickened his pace, and was soon out of hearing.

The words uttered by that voice, however, remained fixed in his memory. He repeated them at every instant. They were, "Will you please give me the little broom?"

By degrees he became bolder. He had the daring to stay awhile. One day it happened that *Déruchette* was singing at her piano, altogether invisible from without, although her window was open. The air was that of "*Bonny Dundee*." He grew pale, but he screwed his courage to the point of listening.

Springtide came. One day *Gilliatt* enjoyed a beatific vision. The heavens were opened, and there before his eyes appeared *Déruchette*, watering lettuces in her little garden.

Soon afterwards he took to doing more than merely listening there. He watched her habits, observed her hours, and waited to catch a glimpse of her.

In all this he was very careful not to be seen.

The year advanced; the time came when the trellises were heavy with roses, and haunted by the butterflies. By little and little, he had come to conceal himself for hours behind the wall, motionless and silent, seen by no one, and holding his breath as *Déruchette* passed in and out of her garden. Men grow accustomed to poison by degrees.

From his hiding-place he could often hear the sound of *Déruchette* conversing with *Mess Lethierry* under a thick arch of leaves, in a spot where there was a garden-seat. The words came distinctly to his ears.

What a change had come over him! He had even descended to watch and listen. Alas! there is something of the character of a spy in every human heart.

There was another garden-seat, visible to him, and nearer. *Déruchette* would sit there sometimes.

From the flowers that he had observed her gathering he had guessed her taste in the matter of perfumes. The scent of the bindweed was her favourite; then the pink; then the honey-suckle; then the jasmine. The rose stood only fifth in the scale. She looked at the lilies, but did not smell them.

*Gilliatt* figured her in his imagination from this choice of odours. With each perfume he associated some perfection.

The very idea of speaking to *Déruchette* would have made his hair stand on end. A poor old rag-picker, whose wandering brought her from time to time into the little road leading under the enclosure of the *Bravées*, had occasionally remarked *Gilliatt's* assiduity beside the wall, and his devotion for this retired spot. Did she connect the presence of a man before this wall with the possibility of a woman behind it? Did she perceive that vague, invisible thread? Was she, in her decrepit mendicancy, still youthful enough to remember something of the old happier days? And could she, in this dark night and winter of her wretched life, still recognize the dawn? We know not; but it appears that, on one occasion, passing near *Gilliatt* at his post, she brought to bear upon him something as like a smile as she was still capable of, and muttered between her teeth, "It warms one."

*Gilliatt* heard the words, and was struck by them. "It warms one," he muttered, with an inward note of interrogation. "It warms one." What did the old woman mean?

He repeated the phrase mechanically all day, but he could not guess its meaning.

### III.

#### THE AIR "*BONNY DUNDEE*" FINDS AN ECHO ON THE HILL.

It was in a spot behind the enclosure of the garden of the *Bravées*, at an angle of the wall, half concealed with holly and ivy, and covered with nettles, wild bush-mallow, and large white mullen growing between the blocks of stone, that he passed the greater part of that summer. He watched there, lost in deep thought. The lizards grew accustomed to his presence, and basked in the sun among the same stones. The summer was bright and full of dreamy indolence: overhead the light clouds came and went. *Gilliatt* sat upon the grass. The air was full of the songs of birds. He held his two hands up to his forehead, sometimes trying to recollect himself: "Why should she write my name in the snow? From a distance the sea breeze came up in gentle breaths, at intervals the horn of the quarrymen sounded abruptly, warning passers-by to take shelter, as they shattered some mass with gunpowder. The Port of St. Sampson was not visible from this place, but he could see the tips of masts above the trees. The sea-gulls flew wide and afar. *Gilliatt* had heard his mother say that women could love men; that such things happened sometimes. He remembered it; and said within himself, "Who knows, may not *Déruchette* love me?" Then a feeling of sadness would come upon him; he would say, "She, too, thinks of me in her turn. It is well." He remembered that *Déruchette*

was rich, and that he was poor: and then the new boat appeared to him an execrable invention. He could never remember what day of the month it was. He would stare listlessly at the great black drones, with their yellow bodies and their short wings, as they entered with a buzzing noise into the holes in the wall.

One evening Déruchette went in-doors to retire to bed. She approached her window to close it. The night was dark. Suddenly something caught her ear, and she listened. Somewhere in the darkness there was a sound of music. It was some one, perhaps, on the hill-side, or at the foot of the towers of Vale Castle, or, perhaps, further still, playing an air upon some instrument. Déruchette recognised her favourite melody, "Bonny Dundee," played upon the bagpipe. She thought little of it.

From that night the music might be heard again from time to time at the same hours, particularly when the nights were very dark.

Déruchette was not much pleased with all this.

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#### IV.

"A serenade by night may please a lady fair,  
But of uncle and of guardian let the Troubadour beware."  
*Unpublished Comedy.*

FOUR years passed away.

Déruchette was approaching her twenty-first year, and was still unmarried. Some writer has said that a fixed idea is a sort of gimlet; every year gives it another turn. To pull it out the first year is like plucking out the hair by the roots; in the second year, like tearing the skin; in the third, like breaking the bones; and in the fourth, like removing the very brain itself.

Gilliatt had arrived at this fourth stage.

He had never yet spoken a word to Déruchette. He lived and dreamed near that delightful vision. This was all.

It happened one day that, finding himself by chance at St. Sampson, he had seen Déruchette talking with Mess Lethierry at the door of the Bravées, which opens upon the roadway of the port. Gilliatt ventured to approach very near. He fancied that at the very moment of his passing she had smiled. There was nothing impossible in that.

Déruchette still heard, from time to time, the sound of the bagpipe.

Mess Lethierry had also heard this bagpipe. By degrees he had come to remark this persevering musician under Déruchette's window. A tender strain, too; all the more suspicious. A nocturnal gallant was a thing not to his taste. His wish was to marry Déruchette in his own time, when she was willing and he was willing, purely and simply, without any romance, or music, or anything of that sort. Irritated at it, he had at last kept a watch, and he fancied that he had detected Gilliatt. He passed his fingers through his beard—a sign of anger—and grumbled out, "What has that fel-

low got to pipe about? He is in love with Déruchette, that is clear. You waste your time, young man. Any one who wants Déruchette must come to me, and not loiter about playing the flute."

An event of importance, long foreseen, occurred soon afterwards. It was announced that the Reverend Jaquemin Hérode was appointed Surrogate of the Bishop of Winchester, Dean of the island, and Rector of St. Peter's Port, and that he would leave St. Sampson for St. Peter's immediately after his successor should be installed.

It could not be long to the arrival of the new rector. He was a gentleman of Norman extraction, one Monsieur Joë Ebenezer Caudray—in English, Cawdry.

Some facts were known about the new rector, which the benevolent and malevolent interpreted in a contrary sense. He was known to be young and poor, but his youth was tempered with much learning, and his poverty by good expectations. In the dialect specially invented for the subject of riches and inheritances, death goes by the name of "expectations." He was the nephew and heir of the aged and opulent Dean of St. Asaph. At the death of this old gentleman he would be a rich man. M. Ebenezer Caudray had distinguished relations. He was almost entitled to the quality of "Honourable." As regarded his doctrine, people judged differently. He was an Anglican, but, according to the expression of Bishop Tillotson, a "libertine"—that is, one who was very severe. He repudiated all pharisaism. He was a friend rather of the Presbytery than the Episcopacy. He dreamed of the Primitive Church of the days when even Adam had the right to choose his Eve, and when Frumartinus, Bishop of Hierapolis, carried off a young maiden to make her his wife, and said to her parents, "Her will is such, and such is mine. You are no longer her mother, and you are no longer her father. I am the Bishop of Hierapolis, and this is my wife. Her father is in Heaven." If the common belief could be trusted, M. Ebenezer Caudray subordinated the text, "Honour thy father and thy mother," to that other text, in his eyes of higher significance, "The woman is the flesh of the man. She shall leave her father and mother to follow her husband." This tendency, however, to circumscribe the parental authority and to favour religiously all modes of forming the conjugal tie, is peculiar to all Protestantism, particularly in England, and singularly so in America.

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#### V.

A DESERVED SUCCESS HAS ALWAYS ITS  
DETRACTORS.

At this period the affairs of Mess Lethierry were in this position: The Durande had well fulfilled all his expectations. He had paid his



debts, repaired his misfortunes, discharged his obligations at Brême, met his acceptances at Saint Malo. He had paid off the mortgage upon his house at the Bravées, and had bought up all the little local rent-charges upon the property. He was also the proprietor of a great productive capital. This was the Durande herself. The net revenue from the boat was about a thousand pounds sterling per annum, and the traffic was constantly increasing. Strictly speaking, the Durande constituted his entire fortune. She was also the fortune of the island. The carriage of cattle being one of the most profitable portions of her trade, he had been obliged, in order to facilitate the stowage, and the embarking and disembarking of animals, to do away with the luggage-boxes and the two boats. It was, perhaps, imprudent. The Durande had but one boat—namely, her long-boat; but this was an excellent one.

Ten years had elapsed since Rantaine's robbery.

This prosperity of the Durande had its weak point. It inspired no confidence. People regarded it as a risk. Lethierry's good fortune was looked upon as exceptional. He was considered to have gained by a lucky rashness. Some one in the Isle of Wight who had imitated him had not succeeded. The enterprise had ruined the shareholders. The engines, in fact, were badly constructed. But people shook their heads. Innovations have always to contend with the difficulty that few wish them well. The least false step compromises them.

One of the commercial oracles of the Channel Islands, a certain banker from Paris, named Jange, being consulted upon a steam-boat speculation, was reported to have turned his back, with the remark, "An investment is it you propose to me? Yes; an investment in smoke."

On the other hand, the sailing vessels had no difficulty in finding capitalists to take shares in a venture. Capital, in fact, was obstinately in favour of sails, and as obstinately against boilers and paddle-wheels. At Guernsey, the Durande was, indeed, a fact, but steam was not yet an established principle. Such is the fanatical spirit of conservatism in opposition to progress. They said of Lethierry, "It is all very well, but he could not do it a second time." Far from encouraging, his example inspired timidity. Nobody would have dared to risk another Durande.

## VI.

### CHANCE OF FINDING THE SLOOP.

THE equinoctial gales began early in the Channel. The sea there is narrow, and the winds disturb it easily. The westerly gales begin from the month of February, and the waves are beaten about from every quarter. Navigation becomes an anxious matter. The people on the coasts look to the signal-post, and

begin to watch for vessels in distress. The sea is then like a cut-throat in ambush for his victim. An invisible trumpet sounds the alarm of war with the elements, furious blasts spring up from the horizon, and a terrible wind soon begins to blow. The dark night whistles and howls. In the depth of the clouds the black tempest distends its cheeks, and the storm arises.

The wind is one danger, the fogs are another.

Fogs have from all time been the terror of mariners. In certain fogs microscopic prisms of ice are found in suspension, to which Mariotte attributes halos, mock suns, and paraselenes. Storm-fogs are of a composite character; various gases of unequal specific gravity combine with the vapour of water, and arrange themselves, layer over layer, in an order which divides the dense mist into zones. Below ranges the iodine; above the iodine is the sulphur; above the sulphur the brome; above the brome the phosphorus. This, in a certain manner, and making allowance for electric and magnetic tension, explains several phenomena, as the St. Elmo fire of Columbus and Magellan, the flying stars moving about the ships of which Seneca speaks; the two flames, Castor and Pollux, mentioned by Plutarch; the Roman legion whose spears appeared to Cæsar to take fire; the peak of the Chateau of Duino, in Friuli, which the sentinel made to sparkle by touching it with his lance; and perhaps even those fulgurations from the earth which the ancients called Satan's terrestrial lightnings. At the equator, an immense mist seems permanently to encircle the globe. It is known as the cloud-ring; the function of the cloud-ring is to temper the heat of the tropics, as that of the Gulf Stream is to mitigate the coldness of the Pole. Under the cloud-ring fogs are fatal. These are what are called the *horse latitudes*. It was here that navigators of bygone ages were accustomed to cast their horses into the sea to lighten the ship in stormy weather, and to economize the fresh water when becalmed. Columbus said, "*Nube abaxo ex muerte*"—death lurks in the low cloud. The Etruscans, who bear the same relation to meteorology which the Chaldeans did to astronomy, had two high-priests—the high-priest of the thunder, and the high-priest of the clouds. The "fulgurators" observed the lightning, and the weather-sages watched the mists. The college of Priest-Augurs was consulted by the Syrians, the Phœnicians, the Pelasgi, and all the primitive navigators of the ancient *Mare Internum*. The origin of tempests was from that time forward partially understood. It is intimately connected with the generation of fogs, and is, properly speaking, the same phenomenon. There exist upon the ocean three regions of fogs—one equatorial, and two polar. The mariners give them but one name, the *pitch-pot*.

In all latitudes, and particularly in the Channel, the equinoctial fogs are dangerous. They shed a sudden darkness over the sea. One of the perils of fogs, even when not very dense,

arises from their preventing the mariners perceiving the change of the bed of the sea by the variations of the colour of the water. The result is a dangerous concealment of the approach of sands and breakers. The vessel steers towards the shoals without receiving any warning. Frequently the fogs leave a ship no resource except to lie-to or to cast anchor. There are as many shipwrecks from the fogs as from the winds.

After a very violent squall succeeding one of these foggy days, the mail-boat *Cashmere* arrived safely from England. It entered at St. Peter's Port as the first gleam of day appeared upon the sea, and at the very moment when the cannon of Castle Cornet announced the break of day. The sky had cleared; the sloop *Cashmere* was anxiously expected, as she was to bring the new rector of St. Sampson.

A little after the arrival of the sloop, a rumour ran through the town that she had been hailed during the night at sea by a long-boat containing a shipwrecked crew.

## VII.

HOW AN IDLER HAD THE GOOD FORTUNE TO BE SEEN BY A FISHERMAN.

On that very night, at the moment when the wind abated, Gilliatt had gone out with his nets, without, however, taking his famous old Dutch boat too far from the coast.

As he was returning with the rising tide, towards two o'clock in the afternoon, the sun was shining brightly, and he passed before the Beast's Horn to reach the little bay of the *Bû de la Rue*. At that moment he fancied that he saw in the projection of the "*Gild-holm-Ur*" seat a shadow which was not that of the rock. He steered his vessel nearer, and was able to perceive a man sitting in the "*Gild-holm-Ur*." The sea was already very high—the rock encircled by the waves—and escape entirely cut off. Gilliatt made signs to the man. The stranger remained motionless. Gilliatt drew nearer; the man was asleep.

He was attired in black. "He looks like a priest," thought Gilliatt. He approached still nearer, and could distinguish the face of a young man.

The features were unknown to him.

The rock, happily, was peaked; there was a good depth. Gilliatt wore off, and succeeded in skirting the rocky wall. The tide raised the bark so high that Gilliatt, by standing upon the gunwale of the sloop, could touch the man's feet. He raised himself upon the planking, and stretched out his hands. If he had fallen at that moment, it is doubtful if he would have risen again on the water; the waves were rolling in between the boat and the rock, and destruction would have been inevitable. He pulled the foot of the sleeping man. "Ho! there. What are you doing in this place!"

The man aroused, and muttered,

"I was looking about."

He was now completely awake, and continued:

"I have just arrived in this part. I came this way on a pleasure trip. I have passed the night on the sea: the view from here seemed beautiful. I was weary, and fell asleep."

"Ten minutes later, and you would have been drowned."

"Pshaw!"

"Jump into my bark!"

Gilliatt kept the bark fast with his foot, clutched the rock with one hand, and stretched out the other to the stranger in black, who sprang quickly into the boat. He was a fine young man.

Gilliatt seized the tiller, and in two minutes his boat entered the bay of the *Bû de la Rue*.

The young man wore a round hat and a white cravat; and his long black frock-coat was buttoned up to the neck. He had fair hair, which he wore *en couronne*. He had a somewhat feminine cast of features, a bright eye, a grave manner.

Meanwhile the boat had touched the ground. Gilliatt passed the cable through the mooring-ring, then turned and perceived the young man holding out a sovereign in a very white hand.

Gilliatt moved the hand gently away.

There was a pause. The young man was the first to break the silence.

"You have saved my life."

"Perhaps," replied Gilliatt.

The moorings were made fast, and they went ashore.

The stranger continued:

"I owe you my life, sir."

"No matter."

This reply from Gilliatt was again followed by a pause.

"Do you belong to this parish?"

"No," replied Gilliatt.

"To what parish, then?"

Gilliatt lifted up his right hand, pointed to the sky, and said,

"To that yonder."

The young man bowed, and left him.

After walking a few paces, the stranger stopped, felt in his pocket, drew out a book, and returning towards Gilliatt, offered it to him.

"Permit me to make you a present of this."

Gilliatt took the volume: it was a Bible.

An instant after, Gilliatt, leaning upon the parapet, was following the young man with his eyes as he turned the angle of the path which led to St. Sampson.

By little and little he lowered his gaze, forgot all about the stranger—knew no more whether the "*Gild-holm-Ur*" existed. Everything disappeared before him in the bottomless depth of a reverie.

There was one abyss which swallowed up all his thoughts. This was *Déruchette*.

A voice calling him aroused him from this dream.



"Ho, there! Gilliatt!"

He recognised the voice and looked up.

"What is the matter, *Sieur Landoys*?"

It was, in fact, *Sieur Landoys*, who was passing along the road about one hundred paces from the *Bû de la Rue* in his phaeton, drawn by one little horse. He had stopped to hail *Gilliatt*, but he seemed hurried.

"There is news, *Gilliatt*."

"Where is that?"

"At the *Bravées*."

"What is it?"

"I am too far off to tell you the story."

*Gilliatt* shuddered.

"Is *Miss Déruchette* going to be married?"

"No; but she had better look out for a husband."

"What do you mean?"

"Go up to the house, and you will learn."

And *Sieur Landoys* whipped on his horse.

## BOOK V.

### THE REVOLVER.

#### I.

##### CONVERSATIONS AT THE *JEAN AUBERGE*.

*SEUR CLUBIN* was a man who bided his time. He was short in stature, and his complexion was yellow. He had the strength of a bull. His sea life had not tanned his skin; his flesh had a sallow hue; it was the colour of a wax candle, of which his eyes, too, had something of the steady light. His memory was peculiarly retentive. With him, to have seen a man once, was to have him like a note in a note-book. His quiet glance took possession of you. The pupil of his eye received the impression of a face, and kept it like a portrait. The face might grow old, but *Sieur Clubin* never lost it; it was impossible to cheat that tenacious memory. *Sieur Clubin* was curt in speech, grave in manner, bold in action. No gestures were ever indulged in by him. An air of candour won everybody to him at first; many people thought him artless. He had a wrinkle in the corner of his eye, astonishingly expressive of simplicity. As we have said, no abler mariner existed; no one like him for reefing a sail, for keeping a vessel's head to the wind, or the sails well set. Never did reputation for religion and integrity stand higher than his. To have suspected him would have been to bring yourself under suspicion. He was on terms of intimacy with *Monsieur Rébuchet*, a money-changer at *St. Malo*, who lived in the *Rue St. Vincent*, next door to the armourer's; and *Monsieur Rébuchet* would say, "I would leave my shop in *Clubin's* hands."

*Sieur Clubin* was a widower; his wife, like himself, had enjoyed a high reputation for probity. She had died with a fame for incorruptible virtue. If the admiral had whispered gallant things in her ear, she would have impeached him before the king. If a saint had made love to her, she would have told it to the priest. This couple, *Sieur* and *Dame Clubin*, had realized in *Torteval* the ideal of the English epithet "respectable." *Dame Clubin's* reputation was as the snowy whiteness of the swan; *Sieur Clubin's* like that of ermine itself—a spot would have been fatal to him. He could hardly have

picked up a pin without making inquiries for the owner. He would send round the towncrier about a box of matches. One day he went into a wine-shop at *St. Servan*, and said to the man who kept it, "Three years ago I breakfasted here; you made a mistake in the bill," and he returned the man thirteen sous. He was the very personification of probity, with a certain compression of the lips indicative of watchfulness.

He seemed, indeed, always on the watch—for rogues, probably.

Every Tuesday he commanded the *Durande* on her passage from *Guernsey* to *St. Malo*. He arrived at *St. Malo* on the Tuesday evening, stayed two days there to discharge and take in a new cargo, and started again for *Guernsey* on Friday morning.

There was at that period at *St. Malo* a little tavern near the harbour, which was called the "*Jean Auberge*."

The construction of the modern quays swept away this house. At this period, the sea came up as far as the *St. Vincent* and *Dinan* gates. *St. Merlin* and *St. Servan* communicated with each other by covered carts and other vehicles, which passed to and fro among vessels lying high and dry, avoiding the buoys, the anchors, and cables, and running the risk now and then of smashing their leathern hoods against the lowered yards, or the bars of a jibboom. Between the tides, the coachmen drove their horses over those sands where six hours afterwards the winds would be beating the rolling waves. The four-and-twenty carrying dogs of *St. Malo*, who tore to pieces a naval officer in 1770, were accustomed to prow about this beach. This excess of zeal on their part led to the destruction of the pack. Their nocturnal barkings are no longer heard between the little and the great *Talard*.

*Sieur Clubin* was accustomed to stay at the *Jean Auberge*. The French office of the *Durande* was held there.

The custom-house officers and coast-guard-men came to take their meals and to drink at the *Jean Auberge*. They had their separate

tables. The custom-house officers of Birrie found it convenient for the service to meet there with their brother officers of St. Malo.

Captains of vessels came there also; but they ate at another table.

Sieur Clubin sat sometimes at one, sometimes at the other table, but preferred the table of the custom-house men to that of the sea-captains. He was always welcome at either.

The tables were well served. There were strange drinks specially provided for foreign sailors. A dandy sailor from Bilboa could have been supplied there with a *helada*. People drank stout there, as at Greenwich, or brown *gueuse*, as at Antwerp.

Masters of vessels who came from long voyages and privateersmen sometimes appeared at the captains' table, where they exchanged news. "How are sugars? That commission is only for small lots.—The brown kinds, however, are going off. Three thousand bags of East India, and five hundred hogheads of Sagua.—Take my word, the opposition will end by defeating Villèle.—What about indigo? Only seven ceerons of Guatemala changed hands.—The 'Nanine-Julia' is in the roads; a pretty three-master from Brittany.—The two cities of La Plata are at loggerheads again.—When Monte Video gets fat, Buenos Ayres grows lean.—It has been found necessary to transfer the cargo of the 'Regina-Celi,' which has been condemned at Callao.—Cocoas go off briskly.—Carrack bags are quoted at one hundred and thirty-four, and Trinidad's at seventy-three.—It appears that at the review in the Champ de Mars, the people cried, 'Down with the ministers!'—The raw salt Saladeros hides are selling—ox-hides at sixty francs, and cows at forty-eight.—Have they passed the Balkan?—What is Diebitsch about?—Aniseed is in demand at San Francisco. Plagniol olive oil is quiet.—Gruyère cheese, in bulk, is thirty-two francs the quintal.—Well, is Leon XII. dead," &c., &c.

All these things were talked about and commented on aloud. At the table of the custom-house and coast-guard officers they spoke in a lower key.

Matters of police and revenue on the coast and in the ports require, in fact, a little more privacy, and a little less clearness in the conversation.

The sea-captains' table was presided over by an old captain of a large vessel, M. Gertrai-Gaboureaux. M. Gertrai-Gaboureaux could hardly be regarded as a man; he was rather a living barometer. His long life at sea had given him a surprising power of prognosticating the state of the weather. He seemed to issue a decree for the weather to-morrow. He sounded the winds, and felt the pulse, as it were, of the tides. He might be imagined requesting the clouds to show their tongue—that is to say, their forked lightnings. He was the physician of the wave, the breeze, and the squall. The ocean was his patient. He had travelled round the world like a doctor going his visits, exam-

ining every kind of climate in its good and bad condition. He was profoundly versed in the pathology of the seasons. Sometimes he would be heard delivering himself in this fashion—"The barometer descended in 1796 to three degrees below tempest point." He was a sailor from real love of the sea. He hated England as much as he liked the ocean. He had carefully studied English seamanship, and considered himself to have discovered its weak point. He would explain how the "Sovereign" of 1637 differed from the "Royal William" of 1670, and from the "Victory" of 1775. He compared their build as to their forecables and quarter-decks. He looked back with regret to the towers upon the deck, and the funnel-shaped tops of the "Great Harry" of 1514—probably regarding them from the point of view of convenient lodging places for French cannon-balls. In his eyes, nations only existed for their naval institutions. He indulged in some odd figures of speech on this subject. He considered the term "The Trinity House" as sufficiently indicating England. The "Northern Commissioners" were in like manner synonymous in his mind with Scotland; the "Ballast Board" with Ireland. He was full of nautical information. He was, in himself, a marine alphabet and almanack, a tariff, and low-water mark all combined. He knew by heart all the lighthouse dues, particularly those of the English coast—one penny per ton for passing before this; one farthing before that. He would tell you that the Small Rock Light, which once used to burn two hundred gallons of oil, now consumes fifteen hundred. Once, aboard ship, he was attacked by a dangerous disease, and was believed to be dying. The crew assembled round his hammock, and in the midst of his groans and agony, he addressed the chief carpenter with the words, "You had better make a mortice in each side of the main caps, and put in a bit of iron to help pass the top ropes through. His habit of command had given to his countenance an expression of authority.

It was rare that the subjects of conversation at the captains' table and at that of the custom-house men were the same. This, however, did happen to be the case in the first days of that month of February, to which the course of this history has now brought us. The three-master "Tamaulipas," Captain Zuela, arrived from Chili and bound thither again, was the theme of discussion at both tables.

At the captains' table they were talking of her cargo; and at that of the custom-house people of certain circumstances connected with her recent proceedings.

Captain Zuela, of Copiapo, was partly a Chilean and partly a Columbian. He had taken a part in the war of Independence in a truly independent fashion, adhering sometimes to Bolívar, sometimes to Morillo, according as he had found it to his interest. He had enriched himself by serving all causes. No man in the world could have been more Bourbonist, more Bonapartist,



more absolutist, more liberal, more atheistical, or more devoutly catholic. He belonged to that great and renowned party which may be called the Luerative party. From time to time he made his appearance in France on commercial voyages; and if report spoke truly, he willingly gave a passage to fugitives of any kind—bankrupts or political refugees, it was all the same to him, provided they could pay. His mode of taking them aboard was simple. The fugitive waited upon a lonely point of the coast, and at the moment of setting sail Tuela would detach a small boat to fetch him. On his last voyage he had assisted in this way an outlaw and fugitive from justice, named Berton; and on this occasion he was suspected of being about to aid the flight of the men implicated in the affair of the *Bidassoa*. The police were informed, and had their eye upon him.

This period was an epoch of flights and escapes. The Restoration in France was a reactionary movement. Revolutions are fruitful of voluntary exile, and restorations of wholesale banishments. During the first seven or eight years which followed the return of the Bourbons, panic was universal—in finance, in industry, in commerce, men felt the ground tremble beneath them. Bankruptcies were numerous in the commercial world; in the political, there was a general rush to escape. Lavalette had taken flight, Lefebvre Desnouettes had taken flight, Delon had taken flight. Special tribunals were again in fashion. People instinctively shunned the esplanade de la Réole, the walls of the Observatoire in Paris, the tower of Taurias in Avignon—dismal landmarks in history where the period of reaction has left its sign-spots, on which the marks of that blood-stained hand are still visible. In London the Thistlewood affair, with its ramifications in France; in Paris the Trogoff trial, with its ramifications in Belgium, Switzerland, and Italy, had increased the motives for anxiety and flight, and given an impetus to that mysterious rout which left so many gaps in the social system of that day. To find a place of safety, this was the general care. To be implicated was to be ruined. The spirit of the military tribunals had survived their institution. Sentences were matters of favour. People fled to Texas, to the Rocky Mountains, to Peru, to Mexico. The men of the Loire, traitors then, but now regarded as patriots, had founded the *Champ d'Asile*. Beranger in one of his songs says,

"Barbarians! we are Frenchmen born;  
Pity us, glorious, yet forlorn."

Self-banishment was the only resource left. Nothing, perhaps, seems simpler than flight, but that monosyllable has a terrible significance. Every obstacle is in the way of the man who slips away. Taking to flight necessitates disguise. Persons of importance—even illustrious characters—were reduced to these expedients, only fit for malefactors. Their independent habits rendered it difficult for them to escape through the meshes of authority. A rogue who

violates the conditions of his ticket-of-leave comports himself before the police as innocently as a saint; but imagine innocence constrained to act a part; virtue disguising its voice; a glorious reputation hiding under a mask. Yonder passer-by is a man of well-earned celebrity; he is in quest of a false passport. The equivocal proceedings of one absconding from the law is no proof that he is not a hero. Ephemeral but characteristic features of the time of which our so-called regular history takes no note, but which the true painter of the age will bring out into relief. Under cover of these flights and concealments of honest men, genuine rogues, less watched and suspected, managed often to get clear off. A scoundrel, who found it convenient to disappear, would take advantage of the general pell-mell, tack himself on to the political refugees, and, thanks to his greater skill in the art, would contrive to appear in that dim twilight more honest even than his honest neighbours. Nothing looks more awkward and confused sometimes than honesty unjustly condemned. It is out of its element, and is almost sure to commit itself.

It is a curious fact that this voluntary expatriation, particularly with honest folks, appeared to lead to every strange turn of fortune. The modicum of civilization which a scamp brought with him from London or Paris became, perhaps, a valuable stock in trade in some primitive country, ingratiated him with the people, and enabled him to strike into new paths. There is nothing impossible in a man's escaping thus from the laws, to reappear elsewhere as a dignitary among the priesthood. There was something phantasmagorical in these sudden disappearances; and more than one such flight has led to events like the marvels of a dream. An escapade of this kind, indeed, seemed to end naturally in the wild and wonderful; as when some broken bankrupt suddenly decamps to turn up again twenty years later as Grand Vizier to the Mogul or as a king in Tasmania.

Rendering assistance to these fugitives was an established trade, and looking to the abundance of business of that kind was a highly profitable one. It was generally carried on as a supplementary branch of certain recognised kinds of commerce. A person, for instance, desiring to escape to England, applied to the smugglers; one who desired to get to America had recourse to sea-captains like Zuela.

## II.

### CLUBIN OBSERVES SOME ONE.

ZUELA came sometimes to take refreshment at the Jean Auberge. Clubin knew him by sight.

For that matter, Clubin was not proud. He did not disdain even to know scamps by sight. He even went so far sometimes as to cultivate even a closer acquaintance with them; giving

his hand in the open street, or saying good-day to them. He talked English with the smugglers, and jabbered Spanish with the *contrebandistas*. On this subject he had at command a number of apologetic phrases. "Good," he said, "can be extracted out of the knowledge of evil. The gamekeeper may find advantage in knowing the poacher. The good pilot may sound the depths of a pirate, who is only a sort of hidden rock. I test the quality of a scoundrel as a doctor will test a poison." There was no answering a battery of proverbs like this. Everybody gave Clubin credit for his shrewdness. People praised him for not indulging in a ridiculous delicacy. Who, then, should dare to speak scandal of him on this point? Everything he did was evidently "for the good of the service." With him all was straightforward. Nothing could stain his good fame. Crystal might more easily become sullied. This general confidence in him was the natural reward of a long life of integrity, the crowning advantage of a settled reputation. Whatever Clubin might do, or appear to do, was sure to be interpreted favourably. He had attained almost to a state of impeccability. Over and above this, "He is very wary," people said; and from a situation which in others would have given rise to suspicion, his integrity would extricate itself with a still greater halo of reputation for ability. This reputation for ability mingled harmoniously with his fame for perfect simplicity of character. Great simplicity and great talents in conjunction are not uncommon. The compound constitutes one of the varieties of the virtuous man, and one of the most valuable. Sieur Clubin was one of those men who might be found in intimate conversation with a sharper or a thief, without suffering any diminution of respect in the minds of their neighbours.

The "Tamaulipas" had completed her loading. She was ready for sea, and was preparing to sail very shortly.

One Tuesday evening the Durande arrived at St. Malo while it was still broad daylight. Sieur Clubin, standing upon the bridge of the vessel, and superintending the manœuvres necessary for getting her into port, perceived upon the sandy beach, near the Petit-Bey, two men, who were conversing between the rocks in a solitary spot. He observed them with his sea-glass, and recognised one of the men. It was Captain Zuela. He seemed to recognise the other also.

This other was a person of high stature, a little gray. He wore the broad-brimmed hat and the sober clothing of the Society of Friends. He was probably a Quaker. He lowered his gaze with an air of extreme diffidence.

On arriving at the Jean Auberge, Sieur Clubin learned that the "Tamaulipas" was preparing to sail in about ten days.

It has since become known that he obtained information on some other points.

That night he entered the gunsmith's shop in the St. Vincent Street, and said to the master,

"Do you know what a revolver is?"

"Yes," replied the gunsmith. "It is an American weapon."

"It is a pistol, with which a man can carry on a conversation."

"Exactly; an instrument which comprises in itself both the question and the answer."

"And the rejoinder too."

"Precisely, Monsieur Clubin. A rotatory clump of barrels."

"I shall want five or six balls."

The gunmaker twisted the corner of his lip, and made that peculiar noise with which, when accompanied by a toss of the head, Frenchmen express admiration.

"The weapon is a good one, Monsieur Clubin."

"I want a revolver with six barrels."

"I have not one."

"What! and you a gunmaker!"

"I do not keep such articles yet. You see, it is a new thing. It is only just coming into vogue. French makers as yet confine themselves to the simple pistol."

"Nonsense."

"It has not yet become an article of commerce."

"Nonsense, I say."

"I have excellent pistols."

"I want a revolver."

"I agree that it is more useful. Stop, Monsieur Clubin!"

"What?"

"I believe I know where there is one at this moment in St. Malo—to be had a bargain."

"A revolver?"

"Yes."

"For sale?"

"Yes."

"Where is that?"

"I believe I know; or I can find out."

"When can you give me an answer?"

"A bargain; but good—"

"When shall I return?"

"If I procure you a revolver, remember, it will be a good one."

"When will you give me an answer?"

"After your next voyage."

"Do not mention that it is for me," said Clubin.

### III.

CLUBIN CARRIES AWAY SOMETHING AND BRINGS BACK NOTHING.

SIEUR CLUBIN completed the loading of the Durande, embarked a number of cattle and some passengers, and left St. Malo for Guernsey as usual on the Friday morning.

On that same Friday, when the vessel had gained the open, which permits the captain to absent himself a moment from the place of command, Clubin entered his cabin, shut himself in, took a travelling bag which he kept there, put into one of its compartments some biscuit, some



boxes of preserves, a few pounds of chocolate in sticks, a chronometer, and a sea telescope, and passed through the handles a cord, ready prepared to sling it if necessary. Then he descended into the hold, went into the compartment where the cables are kept, and was seen to come up again with one of those knotted ropes heavy with pieces of metal, which are used for ship-caulkers at sea, and by robbers ashore. Cords of this kind are useful in climbing.

Having arrived at Guernsey, Clubin repaired to Torteval. He took with him the travelling bag and the knotted cord, but did not bring them back again.

Let us repeat, once for all, the Guernsey which we are describing is that ancient Guernsey which no longer exists, and of which it would be impossible to find a parallel now any where except in the country. There it is still flourishing, but in the towns it has passed away. The same remarks apply to Jersey. St. Heliers is as civilized as Dieppe, St. Peter's Port as L'Orient. Thanks to the progress of civilization, thanks to the admirably enterprising spirit of that brave island people, every thing has been changed during the last forty years in the Norman archipelago. Where there was darkness there is now light. With these premises let us proceed.

At that period, which is already so far removed from us as to have become historical, smuggling was carried on very extensively in the Channel. The smuggling vessels abounded, particularly on the western coast of Guernsey. People of that peculiarly clever kind who know, even in the smallest details, what went on half a century ago, will even cite you the names of these suspicious craft, which were almost always Asturians or Guipuseans. It is certain that a week scarcely ever passed without one or two being seen either in Saint's Bay or at Pleinmont. Their coming and going had almost the character of a regular service. A cavern in the cliffs at Sark was called then, and is still called, the "Shops," from its being the place where these smugglers made their bargains with the purchasers of their merchandise. This sort of traffic had in the Channel a dialect of its own, a vocabulary of contraband technicalities now forgotten, and which was to the Spanish what the "Levantine" is to the Italian.

On many parts of the English coast smuggling had a secret but cordial understanding with legitimate and open commerce. It had access to the house of more than one great financier—by the back stairs, it is true—and its influence extended itself mysteriously through all the commercial world, and the intricate ramifications of manufacturing industry. Merchant on one side, smuggler on the other—such was the key to the secret of many great fortunes. Séguin affirmed it of Bourgain, Bourgain of Séguin. We do not vouch for their accusations; it is possible that they were calumniating each other. However this may have been, it is cer-

tain that the contraband trade, though hunted down by the law, was flourishing enough in certain financial circles. It had relations with "the very best society." Thus the brigand Mandrin in other days found himself occasionally hob-a-nob with the Count of Charolais; for this underhand trade often contrived to put on a very respectable appearance—kept a house of its own, with an irreproachable exterior.

All this necessitated a host of manœuvres and connivances, which required impenetrable secrecy. A contrabandist was intrusted with a good many things, and knew how to keep them secret. An inviolable confidence was the condition of his existence. The first quality, in fact, in a smuggler, was strict honour in his own circle. No discreetness, no smuggling. Fraud had its secrets like the priest's confessional.

These secrets were, indeed, as a rule, faithfully kept. The contrabandist swore to betray nothing, and he kept his word; nobody was more trustworthy than the genuine smuggler. The Judge Alcade of Oyarzun captured a smuggler one day, and put him to torture to compel him to disclose the name of the capitalist who secretly supported him. The smuggler refused to tell. The capitalist in question was the Judge Alcade himself. Of these two accomplices, the judge and the smuggler, the one had been compelled, in order to appear in the eyes of the world to fulfill the law, to put the other to the torture, which the other had patiently borne for the sake of his oath.

The two most famous smugglers who haunted Pleinmont at that period were Blasco and Blasquito. They were *Tocayos*. This was a sort of Spanish or Catholic relationship which consisted in having the same patron saint in heaven; a thing, it will be admitted, not less worthy of consideration than having the same father upon earth.

When a person was initiated into the furtive ways of the contraband business, nothing was more easy, or, from a certain point of view, more troublesome. It was sufficient to have no fear of dark nights, to repair to Pleinmont, and to consult the oracle located there.

#### IV.

##### PLEINMONT.

PLEINMONT, near Torteval, is one of the three corners of the island of Guernsey. At the extremity of the cape there rises a high turfey hill, which looks over the sea.

The height is a lonely place—all the more lonely from there being one solitary house there.

This house adds a sense of terror to that of solitude.

It is popularly believed to be haunted.

Haunted or not, its aspect is singular.

Built of granite, and rising only one story high, it stands in the midst of the grassy solitude. It is in a perfectly good condition as far

as exterior is concerned; the walls are thick and the roof is sound. Not a stone is wanting in the sides, not a tile upon the roof. A brick-built chimney-stack forms the angle of the roof. The building turns its back to the sea, being on that side merely a blank wall. On examining this wall, however, attentively, the visitor perceives a little window bricked up. The two gables have three dormer windows, one fronting the east, the others fronting the west, but all three bricked up in like manner. The front, which looks inward, has alone a door and windows. This door, too, is walled in, as are also the two windows of the ground floor. On the first floor—and this is the feature which is most striking as you approach—there are two open windows; but these are even more suspicious than the blind windows. Their open squares look dark even in broad day, for they have no panes of glass, or even window-frames. They open simply upon the dusk within. They strike the imagination like hollow eye-sockets in a human face. Inside all is deserted. Through the gaping casements you may mark the ruin within. No panellings, no woodwork; all bare stone. It is like a windowed sepulchre, giving liberty to the spectres to look out upon the daylight world. The rains sap the foundations on the seaward side. A few nettles, shaken by the breeze, flourish in the lower part of the walls. Far around the horizon there is no other human habitation. The house is a void—the abode of silence; but if you place your ear against the wall and listen, you may distinguish a confused noise now and then, like the flutter of wings. Over the walled door, upon the stone which forms its architrave, are sculptured these letters, “ELM-PBILG,” with the date “1780.”

The dark shadow of night and the mournful light of the moon find entrance there.

The sea completely surrounds the house. Its situation is magnificent; but for that reason its aspect is more sinister. The beauty of the spot becomes a puzzle. Why does not a human family take up its abode here? The place is beautiful, the house is good. Whence this neglect? To these questions, obvious to the reason, succeed others, suggested by the reverie which the place inspires. Why is this cultivatable garden uncultivated? No master for it; and the bricked-up doorway? What has happened to the place? Why is it shunned by men? What business is done here? If none, why is there no one here? Is it when all the rest of the world are asleep, that some one in this spot is awake? Dark squalls, wild winds, birds of prey, strange creatures, unknown forms, present themselves to the mind, and connect themselves somehow with this deserted house. For what class of wayfarers is this the hostelry? You imagine to yourself whirlwinds of rain and hail beating in at the open casements, and wandering through the rooms. Tempests have left their vague traces upon the interior walls. The chambers, though walled and covered in, are visited by the hurricanes. Has the house been

the scene of some great crime? You may almost fancy that this spectral dwelling, given up to solitude and darkness, might be heard calling aloud for succour. Does it remain silent? Do voices indeed issue from it? What business has it on hand in this lonely place? The mystery of the dark hours rests securely here. Its aspect is disquieting at noon-day; what must it be at midnight? The dreamer asks himself—for dreams have their coherence—what this house may be between the dusk of evening and the twilight of approaching dawn? Has the vast supernatural world some relation with this deserted height, which sometimes compels it to arrest its movements here, and to descend and to become visible? Do the scattered elements of the spirit world whirl around it? Does the impalpable take form and substance here? Insoluble riddles! A holy awe is in the very stones; that dim twilight has surely relations with the infinite Unknown. When the sun has gone down, the song of the birds will be hushed, the goatherd behind the rocks will go homeward with his goats; reptiles, taking courage from the gathering darkness, will creep through the fissures of rocks; the stars will begin to appear, night will come, and yonder two blank casements will still be staring at the sky. They open to welcome spirits and apparitions; for it is by the names of apparitions, ghosts, phantom faces vaguely distinct, masks in the lurid light, mysterious movements of minds, and shadows, that the popular faith, at once ignorant and profound, translates the sombre relations of this dwelling with the world of darkness.

The house is “haunted;” the popular phrase comprises everything.

Credulous minds have their explanation, and common-sense thinkers have theirs also. “Nothing is more simple,” say the one, “than the history of the house. It is an old observatory of the time of the Revolutionary Wars and the days of smuggling. It was built for such objects. The wars being ended, the house was abandoned; but it was not pulled down, as it might one day again become useful. The door and windows have been walled up to prevent people entering, or doing injury to the interior. The walls of the windows, on the three sides which face the sea, have been bricked up against the winds of the south and south-west. That is all.”

The ignorant and the credulous, however, are not satisfied. In the first place, the house was not built at the period of the wars of the Revolution. It bears the date “1780,” which was anterior to the Revolution. In the next place, it was not built for an observatory. It bears the letters “ELM-PBILG,” which are the double monogram of two families, and which indicate, according to usage, that the house was built for the use of a newly-married couple. Then it has certainly been inhabited: why then should it be abandoned? If the door and windows were bricked up to prevent people entering the house only, why were two windows left open?



Why are there no shutters, no window-frames, no glass? Why were the walls bricked in on one side, if not on the other? The wind is prevented from entering from the south; but why is it allowed to enter from the north?

The credulous are wrong, no doubt; but it is clear that the common-sense thinkers have not discovered the key to the mystery. The problem remains still unsolved.

It is certain that the house is generally believed to have been more useful than inconvenient to the smugglers.

The growth of superstitious terror tends to deprive facts of their true proportions. Without doubt, many of the nocturnal phenomena which have, by little and little, secured to the building the reputation of being haunted, might be explained by obscure and furtive visits, by brief sojourns of sailors near the spot, and sometimes by the precaution, sometimes by the daring, of men engaged in certain suspicious occupations concealing themselves for their dark purposes, or allowing themselves to be seen in order to inspire dread.

At this period, already a remote one, many daring deeds were possible. The police—particularly in small places—was by no means as efficient as in these days.

Add to this, that if the house was really, as was said, a resort of the smugglers, their meetings there must, up to a certain point, have been safe from interruption precisely because the house was dreaded by the superstitious people of the country. Its ghostly reputation prevented its being visited for other reasons. People do not generally apply to the police, or officers of customs, on the subject of spectres. The superstitious rely on making the sign of the cross; not on magistrates and indictments. There is always a tacit connivance, involuntary it may be, but not the less real, between the objects which inspire fear and their victims. The terror-stricken feel a sort of culpability in having encountered their terrors; they imagine themselves to have unveiled a secret; and they have an inward fear, unknown even to themselves, of aggravating their guilt, and exciting the anger of the apparitions. All this makes them discreet. And over and above this reason, the very instinct of the credulous is silence; dread is akin to dumbness; the terrified speak little; horror seems always to whisper "Hush!"

It must be remembered that this was a period when the Guernsey peasants believed that the mystery of the Holy Manger is repeated by oxen and asses every year on a fixed day; a period when no one would have dared to enter a stable at night for fear of coming upon the animals on their knees.

If the local legends and stories of the people can be credited, the popular superstition went so far as to fasten to the walls of the house at Pleinmont things of which the traces are still visible, rats without feet, bats without wings, and bodies of other dead animals. Here, too,

were seen toads crushed between the pages of a Bible, bunches of yellow lupins, and other strange offerings, placed there by imprudent passers-by at night, who, having fancied that they had seen something, hoped by these small sacrifices to obtain pardon, and to appease the ill-humours of were-wolves and evil spirits. In all times, believers of this kind have flourished; some even in very high places. Cæsar consulted Saganus, and Napoleon, Mademoiselle Lenormand. There are a kind of consciences so tender that they must seek indulgencies even from Beelzebub. "May God do, and Satan not undo," was one of the prayers of Charles the Fifth. They come to persuade themselves that they may commit sins even against the Evil One; and one of their cherished objects was to be irreproachable even in the eyes of Satan. We find here an explanation of those adorations sometimes paid to infernal spirits. It is only one more species of fanaticism. Sins against the devil certainly exist in certain morbid imaginations. The fancy that they have violated the laws of the lower regions torments certain eccentric casuists; they are haunted with scruples even about offending the demons. A belief in the efficacy of devotions to the spirits of the Broken or Armuyr, a notion of having committed sins against Hell, visionary penances for imaginary crimes, avowals of the truth to the spirit of falsehood, self-accusation before the origin of all evil, and confessions in an inverted sense, are all realities, or things at least which have existed. The annals of criminal procedure against witchcraft and magic prove this in every page. Human folly unhappily extends even thus far: when terror seizes upon a man he does not stop easily. He dreams of imaginary faults, imaginary purifications, and clears out his conscience with the old witches' broom.

Be this as it may, if the house at Pleinmont had its secrets, it kept them to itself; except by some rare chance, no one went there to see. It was left entirely alone. Few people, indeed, like to run the risk of an encounter with the other world.

Owing to the terror which it inspired, and which kept at a distance all who could observe or bear testimony on the subject, it had always been easy to obtain an entrance there at night by means of a rope-ladder, or even by the use of the first ladder coming to hand in one of the neighbouring fields. A consignment of goods or provisions, left there, might await in perfect safety the time and opportunity for a furtive embarkation. Tradition relates that forty years ago a fugitive—for political offences as some affirm, for commercial as others say—remained for some time concealed in the haunted house at Pleinmont, whence he finally succeeded in embarking in a fishing-boat for England. From England, a passage is easily obtained to America.

Tradition also avers that provisions deposited in this house remain there untouched, Lucifer and the smugglers having an interest in inducing whoever places them there to return.

From the summit of this house there is a view to the south of the Hanway Rocks, at about a mile from the shore.

These rocks are famous. They have been guilty of all the evil deeds of which rocks are capable. They are the most ruthless destroyers of the sea. They lie in a treacherous ambush for vessels in the night. They have contributed to the enlargement of the cemeteries at Torteval and Rocquaine.

A lighthouse was erected upon these rocks in 1862. At the present day, the Hanways light the way for the vessels which they once lured to destruction; the destroyer in ambush now bears a lighted torch in his hand; and mariners seek in the horizon, as a protector and a guide, the rock which they used to fly as a pitiless enemy. It gives confidence by night in that vast space where it was so long a terror—like a robber converted into a gendarme.

There are three Hanways—the Great Hanways, the Little Hanways, and the Purple Hanways. It is upon the Little Hanways that the Red Light is placed at the present time.

This reef of rocks forms part of a group of peaks, some beneath the sea, some rising out of it. It towers above them all; like a fortress, it has advanced works: on the side of the open sea, a chain of thirteen rocks; on the north, two breakers—the High Fourquies, the Needles, and a sand-bank called the Héroucé. On the south, three rocks—the Cat Rock, the Percée, and the Herpin Rock; then two banks—the South Bank and the Muet; besides which, there is, on the side opposite Pleinmont, the *Tas de Pois d'Aval*.

To swim across the channel from the Hanways to Pleinmont is difficult, but not impossible. We have already said that this was one of the achievements of Clubin. The expert swimmer who knows this channel can find two resting-places—the Round Rock, and further on, a little out of the course, to the left, the Red Rock.

## V.

### THE BIRDS'-NESTERS.

It was near the period of that Saturday which was passed by Sieur Clubin at Torteval that a curious incident occurred, which was little known at the time, and which did not generally transpire till a long time afterwards. For many things, as we have already observed, remain undivulged, simply by reason of the terror which they have caused in those who have witnessed them.

In the night-time between Saturday and Sunday—we are exact in the matter of the date, and we believe it to be correct—three boys climbed up the hill at Pleinmont. The boys returned to the village: they came from the seashore. They were what are called, in the corrupt French of that part, “*déniquoiseaux*,” or birds'-nesters. Wherever there are cliffs and

cleft-rocks overhanging the sea, the young birds'-nesters abound. The reader will remember that Gilliatt interfered in this matter for the sake of the birds as well as for the sake of the children.

The “*déniquoiseaux*” are a sort of sea-urchins, and are not a very timid species.

The night was very dark. Dense masses of cloud obscured the zenith. Three o'clock had sounded in the steeple of Torteval, which is round and pointed like a magician's hat.

Why did the boys return so late? Nothing more simple. They had been searching for sea-gulls' nests in the *Tas de Pois d'Aval*. The season having been very mild, the pairing of the birds had begun very early. The children, watching the fluttering of the male and female about their nests, and excited by the pursuit, had forgotten the time. The waters had crept up around them; they had no time to regain the little bay in which they had moored their boat, and they were compelled to wait upon one of the peaks of the *Tas de Pois* for the ebb of the tide. Hence their late return. Mothers wait on such occasions in feverish anxiety for the return of their children, and when they find them safe, give vent to their joy in the shape of anger, and relieve their tears by dealing them a sound drubbing. The boys accordingly hastened their steps, but in fear and trembling. Their haste was of that sort which is glad of an excuse for stopping, and which is not inconsistent with a reluctance to reach their destination; for they had before them the prospect of warm embraces, to be followed with an inevitable thrashing.

One only of the boys had nothing of this to fear. He was an orphan: a French boy, without father or mother, and perfectly content just then with his motherless condition; for nobody taking any interest in him, his back was safe from the dreaded blows. The two others were natives of Guernsey, and belonged to the parish of Torteval.

Having climbed the grassy hill, the three birds'-nesters reached the table-land on which was situate the haunted house.

They began by being in fear, which is the proper frame of mind of every passer-by, and particularly of every child at that hour and in that place.

They had a strong desire to take to their heels as fast as possible, and a strong desire, also, to stay and look.

They did stop.

They looked towards the solitary building.

It was all dark and terrible.

It stood in the midst of the solitary plain—an obscure block, a hideous but symmetrical excrescence; a high square, massed with right-angled corners, something like an immense altar in the darkness.

The first thought of the boys was to run: the second was to draw nearer. They had never seen this house before. There is such a thing as a desire to be frightened arising from curios-



ity. They had a little French boy with them, which emboldened them to approach.

It is known that the French have no fear.

Besides, it is reassuring to have company in danger; to be frightened in the company of two others is encouraging.

And then they were a sort of hunters accustomed to peril. They were children; they were used to search, to rummage, to spy out hidden things. They were in the habit of peeping into holes; why not into this hole? Hunting is exciting. Looking into birds'-nests perhaps gives an itch for looking a little into a nest of ghosts. A rummage in the dark regions. Why not?

From prey to prey, says the proverb, we come to the devil. After the birds, the demons. The boys were on the way to learn the secret of those terrors of which their parents had told them. To be on the track of hobgoblin tales—nothing could be more attractive. To have long stories to tell like the good housewives. The notion was tempting.

All this mixture of ideas, in their state of half confusion, half instinct, in the minds of the Guernsey birds'-nesters, finally screwed their courage to the point. They approached the house.

The little fellow who served them as a sort of moral support in the adventure was certainly worthy of their confidence. He was a bold boy—an apprentice to a ship-caulker; one of those children who have already become men. He slept on a little straw in a shed in the ship-caulker's yard, getting his own living, having red hair, and a loud voice; climbing easily up walls and trees, not encumbered with prejudices in the matter of property in the apples within his reach; a lad who had worked in the repairing dock for vessels of war—a child of chance, a happy orphan, born in France, no one knew exactly where; ready to give a centime to a beggar; a mischievous fellow, but a good one at heart; one who had talked to Parisians. At this time he was earning a shilling a day by caulking the fishermen's boats under repair at the Péqueriet. When he felt inclined he gave himself a holiday, and went birds'-nesting. Such was the little French boy.

The solitude of the place impressed them with a strange feeling of dread. They felt the threatening aspect of the silent house. It was wild and savage. The naked and deserted plateau terminated in a precipice at a short distance from its steep incline. The sea below was quiet. There was no wind. Not a blade of grass stirred.

The birds'-nesters advanced by slow steps, the French boy at their head, and looking towards the house.

One of them, afterwards relating the story, or as much of it as had remained in his head, added, "It did not speak."

They came nearer, holding their breath, as one might approach a savage animal.

They had climbed the little hill at the side of the house which descended to seaward to-

wards a little isthmus of rocks almost inaccessible. They had come pretty near to the building; but they saw only the southern side, which was all walled up. They did not dare to approach by the other side, where the terrible windows were.

They grew bolder, however; the caulker's apprentice whispered, "Let's veer to starboard. That's the handsome side. Let's have a look at the black windows."

The little band accordingly "veered to starboard," and came round to the other side of the house.

The two windows were lighted up.

The boys took to their heels.

When they had got to some distance, the French boy, however, returned.

"Hillo!" said he, "the lights have vanished."

The light at the windows had, indeed, disappeared. The outline of the building was seen as sharply defined as if stamped out with a punch against the livid sky.

Their fear was not abated, but their curiosity had increased. The birds'-nesters approached.

Suddenly the light reappeared at both windows at the same moment.

The two young urchins from Torteval took to their heels; and vanished. The daring French boy did not advance, but he kept his ground.

He remained motionless, confronting the house, and watching it.

The light disappeared, and appeared again once more. Nothing could be more horrible. The reflection made a vague streak of light upon the grass, wet with the night dew. All of a moment the light cast upon the walls of the house two huge dark profiles, and the shadows of enormous heads.

The house, however, being without ceilings, and having nothing left but its four walls and roof, one window could not be lighted without the other.

Perceiving that the caulker's apprentice kept his ground, the other birds'-nesters returned, step by step, and one after the other, trembling and curious. The caulker's apprentice whispered to them, "There are ghosts in the house. I have seen the nose of one." The two Torteval boys got behind their companion, standing tiptoe against his shoulder; and thus sheltered, and taking him for their shield, felt bolder, and watched also.

The house, on its part, seemed also to be watching them. There it stood in the midst of that vast darkness and silence, with its two shining eyes. These were its upper windows. The light vanished, reappeared, and vanished again, in the fashion of these unearthly illuminations. These sinister intermissions have, probably, some connection with the opening and shutting of the infernal regions. The air-hole of a sepulchre has thus been seen to produce effects like those from a dark lantern.

Suddenly a dark form, like that of a human being, ascended to one of the windows, as if

from without, and plunged into the interior of the house.

To enter by the window is the custom with spirits.

The light was for a moment more brilliant, then went out, and appeared no more. The house became dark. The noises resembled voices. This is always the case. When there is anything to be seen, it is silent. When all becomes invisible again, noises are heard.

There is a silence peculiar to night-time at sea. The repose of darkness is deeper on the water than on the land. When there is neither wind nor wave in that wild expanse, over which, in ordinary time, even the flight of eagles makes no sound, the movement of a fly could be heard. This sepulchral quiet gave a dismal relief to the noises which issued from the house.

"Let us look," said the French boy.

And he made a step towards the house.

The others were so frightened that they resolved to follow him. They did not dare even to run away alone.

Just as they had passed a heap of fagots, which for some mysterious reason seemed to inspire them with a little courage in that solitude, a white owl flew towards them from a bush. The owls have a suspicious sort of flight, a side-long skim which is suggestive of mischief afloat. The bird passed near the boys, fixing upon them its round eyes, bright amidst the darkness.

A shudder ran through the group behind the French boy.

He looked up at the owl, and said,

"Too late, my bird; I *will* look."

And he advanced.

The crackling sound made by his thick-nailed boots among the furze-bushes did not prevent his hearing the sounds in the house, which rose and fell with the continuousness and the calm accent of a dialogue.

A moment afterwards, the boy added,

"Besides, it is only fools who believe in spirits."

Insolence in the midst of danger rallies the cowardly, and inspires them to go on.

The two Torteval lads resumed their march, quickening their steps behind the caulker's apprentice.

The haunted house seemed to them to grow larger before their eyes. This optical illusion of fear is founded in reality. The house did indeed grow larger, for they were coming nearer to it.

Meanwhile the voices in the house took a tone more and more distinct. The children listened. The ear, too, has its power of exaggerating. It was different from a murmur, more than a whispering, less than an uproar. Now and then one or two words, clearly articulated, could be caught. These words, impossible to be understood, sounded strangely. The boys stopped and listened, then went forward again.

"It is the ghosts talking," said the caulker's apprentice; "but I don't believe in ghosts."

The Torteval boys were sorely tempted to

shrink behind the heap of fagots, but they had already left it far behind; and their friend the caulker continued to advance towards the house. They trembled at remaining with him, but they dared not leave him.

Step by step, and perplexed, they followed. The caulker's apprentice turned towards them and said,

"You know it isn't true. There are no such things."

The house grew taller and taller. The voices became more and more distinct.

They drew nearer.

And now they could perceive within the house something like a muffled light. It was a faint glimmer, like one of those effects produced by dark lanterns, already referred to, and which are common at the midnight meetings of witches.

When they were close to the house they halted.

One of the two Torteval boys ventured on an observation:

"It isn't spirits: it is ladies dressed in white."

"What's that hanging from the window?" asked the other.

"It looks like a rope."

"It's a snake."

"It is only cords hanging there," said the French boy, authoritatively. "It is their way of getting up. But I don't believe in them."

And in three bounds, rather than steps, he found himself against the wall of the building.

The two others, trembling, imitated him, and came pressing against him, one on his right side, the other on his left. The boys applied their ears to the wall. The sounds continued.

The following was the conversation of the phantoms:

"Asi, entendido esta?"

"Entendido."

"Dicho?"

"Dicho."

"Aqui esperara un hombre, y podra marcharse en Inglaterra con Blasquito."

"Pagando?"

"Pagando."

"Blasquito tomara al hombre en su barca."

"Sin buscar para conocer a su pais?"

"No nos toca."

"Ni a su nombre del hombre?"

"So that is understood?"

"Understood."

"As is said?"

"As is said."

"A man will wait here, and can accompany Blasquito to England."

"Paying the expense?"

"Paying the expense."

"Blasquito will take the man in his barque without seeking to know what country he belongs to?"

"That is no business of ours."

"Without asking his name?"



"No se pide el nombre, pero se pesa la bolsa."

"Bien: esperara el hombre en esa casa."

"Tenga que comer."

"Tendra."

"Onde?"

"En este saco que he llevado."

"Muy bien."

"Puedo dexar el saco aqui?"

"Los contrabandistas no son ladrones."

"Y vosotros, cuando marchais?"

"Mañana por la mañana. Si su hombre de usted parado, podria venir con nosotros."

"Parado no esta."

"Hacienda suya."

"Cuantos dias esperara alli?"

"Dos, tres, quatro dias; menos o mas."

"Es cierto que el Blasquito vendra?"

"Cierto."

"En este Plainmont?"

"En este Plainmont."

"A qual semana?"

"La que viene."

"A qual dia?"

"Viernes, o sabado, o domingo."

"No puede faltar?"

"Es mi tocayo."

"Por qualquiera tiempo viene?"

"Qualquiera. No tieme. Soy el Blasco, es el Blasquito."

"Asi, no puede faltar de venir en Guernesey?"

"We do not ask for names; we only feel the weight of the purse."

"Good: the man shall wait in this house."

"He must have provisions."

"He will be furnished with them."

"How?"

"From this bag which I have brought."

"Very good."

"Can I leave this bag here?"

"Smugglers are not robbers."

"And when do you go?"

"To-morrow morning. If your man was ready he could come with us."

"He is not prepared."

"That is his affair."

"How many days will he have to wait in this house?"

"Two, three, or four days; more or less."

"Is it certain that Blasquito will come?"

"Certain."

"Here to Plainmont?"

"To Plainmont."

"When?"

"Next week."

"What day?"

"Friday, Saturday, or Sunday."

"May he not fail?"

"He is my Tocayo."

"Will he come in any weather?"

"At any time. He has no fear. My name is Blasco, his Blasquito."

"So he cannot fail to come to Guernesey?"

"Vengo a un mes, y viene al otro mes."

"Entiendo."

"A cuentar del otro sabado, desde hoy en ocho, no se pasaran cinco dias sin que venga el Blasquito."

"Pero un muy malo mar?"

"Egurraldia gaiztoa."

"Si."

"No vendria el Blasquito tan pronto, pero vendria."

"Donde vendra?"

"De Vilvao."

"Onde ira?"

"En Portland."

"Bien."

"O en Tor Bay."

"Mejor."

"Su humbre de usted puede estarse quieto."

"No traidor sera, el Blasquito?"

"Los cabardes son traidores. Somos valientes. El mar es la iglesia del invierno. La traicion es la iglesia del infierno."

"No se entiende a lo que decimos?"

"Escuchar a nosotros y mirar a nosotros es imposible. La espanta hace alli el desierto."

"Lo sè."

"Quien se atravesaria a escuchar?"

"Es verdad."

"Y escucharian que no entiendrian. Hablamos a una lengua fiera y nuestra que no se conoce. Despues que la sabeis, eries con nosotros."

"I come one month—he the other."

"I understand."

"Counting from Saturday next, one week from to-day; five days cannot elapse without bringing Blasquito."

"But if there is much sea?"

"Bad weather."

"Yes."

"Blasquito will not come so quickly, but he will come."

"Whence will he come?"

"From Bilbao."

"Where will he be going?"

"To Portland."

"Good."

"Or to Torbay."

"Better still."

"Your man may rest easy."

"Blasquito will betray nothing?"

"Cowards are the only traitors. We are men of courage. The sea is the winter church. Treason is the church of hell."

"No one hears what we say?"

"It is impossible to be seen or overheard. The people's fear of this spot makes it deserted."

"I know it."

"Who is there who would dare to listen here?"

"True."

"Besides, if they listened, none would understand. We speak a wild language of our own, which nobody knows hereabouts. As you know it, you are one of us."

"Soy venido para componer las haciendas con ustedes."

"Bueno."

"Y ahora me voy."

"Mucho."

"Dígame usted, hombre. Si el pasajero quiere que el Blasquito le lleve en ninguna otra parte que Portland o Tor Bay?"

"Tenga onces."

"El Blasquito hará lo que querra el hombre?"

"El Blasquito hace lo que quieren las onces."

"Es menester mucho tiempo para ir en Tor Bay?"

"Como quiere el viento."

"Ocho horas?"

"Menos, o mas."

"El Blasquito obedecera al pasajero?"

"Si le obedece el mar a el Blasquito."

"Bien pagado sera."

"El oro es el oro. El viento es el viento."

"Mucho."

"El hombre hace lo que puede con el oro. Dios con el viento hace lo que quiere."

"Aquí sera viernes el que desea marcharse con Blasquito."

"Pues."

"A qual momento llega Blasquito?"

"A la noche. A la noche se llega, a la noche se marcha. Tenemos una muger quien se llama la noche. La muger puede faltar, la hermana no."

"Todo dicho esta. About, hombres."

"I came only to make these arrangements with you."

"Very good."

"I must now take my leave."

"Be it so."

"Tell me; suppose the passenger should wish Blasquito to take him anywhere else than to Portland or Torbay?"

"Let him bring some gold coins."

"Will Blasquito consult the stranger's convenience?"

"Blasquito will do whatever the gold coins command."

"Does it take long to go to Torbay?"

"That is as it pleases the winds."

"Eight hours?"

"More or less."

"Will Blasquito obey the passenger?"

"If the sea will obey Blasquito."

"He will be well rewarded."

"Gold is gold; and the sea is the sea."

"That is true."

"Man with his gold does what he can. Heaven with its winds does what it will."

"The man who is to accompany Blasquito will be here on Friday."

"Good."

"At what hour will Blasquito appear?"

"In the night. We arrive by night; and sail by night. We have a wife who is called the sea, and a sister called night. The wife betrays sometimes, but the sister never."

"All is settled, then. Good-night, my men."

"Buenas tardes. Un golpe de aguardiente?"

"Gracias."

"Es mejor que xarope."

"Tengo vuestra palabra."

"Mi nombre es Pundonor."

"Sea usted con Dios."

"Ereis gentleman, y soy caballero."

"Good-night. A drop of brandy first?"

"Thank you."

"That is better than a syrup."

"I have your word."

"My name is Point-of-Honour."

"Adieu."

"You are a gentleman, I am a chevalier."

It was clear that only devils could talk in this way. The children did not listen long. This time they took to flight in earnest; the French boy, convinced at last, running even quicker than the others.

On the Tuesday following this Saturday, Sieur Clubin returned to St. Malo, bringing back the Durande.

The "Tamaulipas" was still at anchor in the roads.

Sieur Clubin, between the whiffs of his pipe, said to the landlord of the Jean Auberge,

"Well, and when does the 'Tamaulipas' get under way?"

"The day after to-morrow—Thursday," replied the landlord.

On that evening Clubin supped at the coast-guard officers' table; and, contrary to his habit, went out after his supper. The consequence of his absence was, that he could not attend to the office of the Durande, and thus lost a little in the matter of freights. This fact was remarked in a man ordinarily punctual.

It appeared that he had chatted a few moments with his friend the money-changer.

He returned two hours after Noguette had sounded the Curfew bell. The Brazilian bell sounds at ten o'clock. It was therefore midnight.

## VI.

### THE JACRESSADE.

Forty years ago, St. Malo possessed an alley known by the name of the "Ruelle Coutanchez." This alley no longer exists, having been removed for the improvements of the town.

It was a double row of houses, leaning one towards the other, and leaving between them just room enough for a narrow rivulet, which was called the street. By stretching the legs, it was possible to walk on both sides of the little stream, touching with head or elbows, as you went, the houses either on the right or the left. These old relics of mediæval Normandy have almost a human interest. Tumble-down houses and sorcerers always go together. Their leaning stories, their overhanging walls, their bowed penthouses, and their old thick-set irons, seem like lips, chins, nose, and eyebrows. The gar-



ret window is the blind eye. The wall is the wrinkled and blotchy cheek. The opposite houses lay their foreheads together as if they were plotting some malicious deed. All those words of ancient villainy—like cut-throat, slit-weazand, and the like—are closely connected with architecture of this kind.

One of these houses in the alley—the largest and the most famous or notorious—was known by the name of the *Jacressade*.

The *Jacressade* was a lodging-house for people who do not lodge. In all towns, and particularly in sea-ports, there is always found beneath the lowest stratum of society a sort of residuum: vagabonds who are more than a match for justice; rovers after adventures; chemists of the swindling order, who are always dropping their lives' gain into the melting-pot; people in rags of every shape, and in every style of wearing them; withered fruits of roguery; bankrupt existences; consciences that have filed their schedule; gentlemen who have failed in the house-breaking business (for the great masters of burglary move in a higher sphere); workmen and workwomen in the trade of wickedness; oddities, male and female; men in coats out at elbows; scoundrels reduced to indigence; rogues who have missed the wages of roguery; men who have been hit in the social duel; harpies who have no longer any prey; petty larceners; *gueux* in the double and unhappy meaning of that word. Such are the constituents of that living mass. Human intelligence is here reduced to something bestial. It is the refuse of the social state, heaped up in an obscure corner, where from time to time descends that dreaded broom which is known by the name of police. In St. Malo, *Jacressade* was the name of this corner.

It is not in dens of this sort that we find the high-class criminals—the robbers, forgers, and other great products of ignorance and poverty. If murder is represented here, it is generally in the person of some coarse drunkard; in the matter of robbery, the company rarely rise higher than the mere sharper. The vagrant is there, but not the highwayman. It would not, however, be safe to trust this distinction. This last stage of vagabondage may have its extremes of scoundrelism. It was on an occasion, when casting their nets into the *Epi-scié*—which was in Paris what the *Jacressade* was in St. Malo—that the police captured the notorious *Lacenaire*.

These lurking-places refuse nobody. To fall in the social scale has a tendency to bring men to one level. Sometimes honesty in tatters found itself there. Virtue and probity have been known before now to be brought to strange passes. We must not judge always by appearances, even in the palace or at the galleys. Public respect, as well as universal reprobation, require testing. Surprising results sometimes proceed from this principle. An angel may be discovered in the stews—a pearl in the dung-hill. Such sad and dazzling discoveries are not altogether unknown.

The *Jacressade* was rather a court-yard than a house; and more of a well than a court-yard. It had no stories looking on the street. Its façade was simply a high wall, with a low gateway. You raised the latch, pushed the gate, and were at once in the court-yard.

In the midst of this yard might be perceived a round hole, encircled with a margin of stones, and even with the ground. The yard was small, the well large. A broken pavement surrounded it.

The court-yard was square, and built round on three sides only. On the side of the street was only the wall; facing you as you entered the gateway stood the house, the two wings of which formed the sides to right and left.

Any one entering there after nightfall, at his own risk and peril, would have heard a confused murmur of voices; and, if there had been moonlight or starlight enough to give shape to the obscure forms before his eyes, this is what he would have seen.

The court-yard—the well. Around the court-yard, in front of the gate, a lean-to or shed, in a sort of horse-shoe form, but with square corners; a rotten gallery, with a roof of joists supported by stone pillars at unequal distances. In the centre, the well; around the well, upon a litter of straw, a kind of circular chaplet, formed of the soles of boots and shoes; some trodden down at heel, some showing the toes of the wearers, some the naked heels. The feet of men, women, and children, all asleep.

Beyond these feet, the eye might have distinguished, in the shadow of the shed, bodies, drooping heads, forms stretched out lazily, bundles of rags of both sexes, a promiscuous assemblage, a strange and revolting mass of life. The accommodation of this sleeping chamber was open to all, at the rate of two sous a week. On a stormy night the rain fell upon the feet, the whirling snow settled on the bodies of those wretched sleepers.

Who were these people? The unknown. They came there at night, and departed in the morning. Creatures of this kind form part of the social fabric. Some stole in during the darkness, and paid nothing. The greater part had scarcely eaten during the day. All kinds of vice and baseness, every sort of moral infection, every species of distress were there. The same sleep settled down upon all in this bed of filth. The dreams of all these companions in misery went on side by side. A dismal meeting-place, where misery and weakness, half-sobered debauchery, weariness from long walking to and fro, with evil thoughts, in quest of bread, pallor with closed eyelids, remorse, envy, lay mingled and festering in the same miasma, with faces that had the look of death, and dishevelled hair mixed with the filth and sweepings of the streets. Such was the putrid heap of life fermenting in this dismal spot. An unlucky turn of the wheel of fortune, a ship arrived on the day before, a discharge from prison, or the dark night, or some other chance, had cast them here,

to find a miserable shelter. Every day brought some new accumulation of such misery. Let him enter who would, sleep who could, speak who dared; for it was a place of whispers. The new-comers hastened to bury themselves in the mass, or tried to seek oblivion in sleep, since there was none in the darkness of the place. They snatched what little of themselves they could from the jaws of death. They closed their eyes in that confusion of horrors which every day renewed. They were the embodiment of misery, cast up from society, as the scum is from the sea.

It was not every one who could even get a share of the straw. More than one figure was stretched out naked upon the flags. They lay down worn out with weariness, and awoke paralyzed. The well, without lid or parapet, and thirty feet in depth, gaped open night and day. Rain fell around it; filth accumulated about, and the gutters of the yard ran down and filtered through its sides. The pail for drawing the water stood by the side. Those who were thirsty drank there: some, disgusted with life, drowned themselves in it—slipped from their slumber in the filthy shed into this profounder sleep. In the year 1819, the body of a boy, of fourteen years old, was taken up out of the well.

To be safe in this house, it was necessary to be of the "right sort." The uninitiated were regarded with suspicion.

Did these miserable wretches, then, know each other? No; yet they scented out the genuine habitué of the *Jacressade*.

The mistress of the house was a young and rather pretty woman, wearing a cap trimmed with ribbons. She washed herself now and then with water from the well. She had a wooden leg.

At break of day, the court-yard became empty. Its inmates dispersed.

An old cock and some other fowls were kept in the court-yard, where they raked among the filth of the place all day long. A long horizontal beam, supported by posts, traversed the yard—a gibbet-shaped erection, not altogether out of keeping with the associations of the place. Sometimes, on the morrow of a rainy day, a silk dress, mudded and wet, would be seen hanging out to dry upon this beam. It belonged to the woman with the wooden leg.

Over the shed, and like it, surrounding the yard, was a story, and above this story a loft. A rotten wooden ladder, passing through a hole in the roof of the shed, conducted to this story; and up this ladder the woman would climb, sometimes staggering while its crazy rounds creaked beneath her.

The occasional lodgers, whether by the week or the night, slept in the court-yard; the regular inmates lived in the house.

Windows without a pane of glass, door-frames with no door, fireplaces without stoves—such were the chief features of the interior. You might pass from one room to the other indifferently, by a long square aperture which had been

the door, or by a triangular hole between the joists of the partition. The fallen plaster of the ceiling lay about the floor. It was difficult to say how the old house still stood erect. The high winds indeed shook it. The lodgers ascended as they could by the worn and slippery steps of the ladder. Everything was open to the air. The wintry atmosphere was absorbed into the house, like water into a sponge. The multitude of spiders seemed to guarantee the place against falling to pieces immediately. There was no sign of furniture. Two or three palliasses were in the corner, their ticking torn in parts, and showing more dust than straw within. Here and there were a water-pot and an earthen pipkin. A close, disagreeable odour haunted the rooms.

The windows looked out upon the square yard. The scene was like the interior of a scavenger's cart. The things, not to speak of the human beings, which lay rusting, mouldering, and putrefying there, were indescribable. The fragments seemed to fraternize together. Some fell from the walls, others from the living tenants of the place. The debris was sown with their tatters.

Besides the floating population which bivouacked nightly in the square yard, the *Jacressade* had three permanent lodgers—a charcoal-man, a rag-picker, and a "gold-maker." The charcoal-man and the rag-picker occupied two of the palliasses of the first story; the "gold-maker," a chemist, lodged in the loft, which was called, no one knew why, the garret. Nobody knew where the woman slept. The "gold-maker" was a poet in a small way. He inhabited a room in the roof, under the tiles—a chamber with a narrow window, and a large stone fireplace forming a gulf, in which the wind howled at will. The garret window having no frame, he had nailed across it a piece of iron sheathing, part of the wreck of a ship. This sheathing left little room for the entrance of light, and much for the entrance of cold. The charcoal-man paid rent from time to time in the shape of a sack of charcoal; the rag-picker paid with a bowl of grain for the fowls every week; the "gold-maker" did not pay at all. Meanwhile the latter consumed the very house itself for fuel. He had pulled down the little wood-work which remained; and every now and then he took from the wall or the roof a lath or some scantling, to heat his crucible. Upon the partition, above the rag-picker's mattress, might have been seen two columns of figures, marked in chalk by the rag-picker himself from week to week—a column of threes, and a column of fives—according as the bowl of grain had cost him three liards or five centimes. The gold-pot of the "chemist" was an old fragment of a bomb-shell, promoted by him to the dignity of a crucible, in which he mixed his ingredients. The transmutation of metals absorbed all his thoughts. He was determined not to die until he had revenged himself by breaking the windows of orthodox science with the real philosopher's stone. His fur-



nance consumed a good deal of wood. The hand-rail of the stairs had disappeared. The house was slowly burning away. The landlady said to him, "You will leave us nothing but the shell." He mollified her by addressing her in verses.

Such was the Jacressade.

A boy of twelve, or, perhaps, sixteen—for he was like a dwarf, with a large wen upon his neck, and always carrying a broom in his hand—was the domestic of the place.

The habitués entered by the gateway of the court-yard; the public entered by the shop.

What was this shop?

In the high wall, facing the street, and to the right of the entrance to the court-yard, was a square opening, serving at once as a door and a window. It had a shutter and a frame—the only shutter in all the house which had hinges and bolts. Behind this square aperture, which was open to the street, was a little room, a compartment obtained by curtailing the sleeping shed in the court-yard. Over the door, passers-by read the inscription in charcoal, "Curiosities sold here." On three boards, forming the shop front, were several pots without ears, a Chinese parasol made of gold-beaters' skin, and ornamented with figures, torn here and there, and impossible to open or shut; fragments of iron, and shapeless pieces of old pottery, and dilapidated hats and bonnets; three or four shells, some packets of old bone and metal buttons, a tobacco-box with a portrait of Marie-Antoinette, and a dog's-eared volume of Boisbertrand's Algebra. Such was the stock of the shop; this assortment completed the "curiosities." The shop communicated by a back door with the yard in which was the well. It was furnished with a table and a stool. The woman with a wooden leg presided at the counter.

## VII.

### NOCTURNAL BUYERS AND MYSTERIOUS SELLERS.

CLUBIN had been absent from the Jean Auberge all the evening of Tuesday. On the Wednesday night he was absent again.

In the dusk of that evening, two strangers penetrated into the mazes of the ruelle Coutanchez. They stopped in front of the Jacressade. One of them knocked at the window; the door of the shop opened, and they entered. The woman with the wooden leg met them with the smile which she reserved for respectable citizens. There was a candle on the table.

The strangers were, in fact, respectable citizens. The one who had knocked said, "Good-day, mistress. I have come for that affair."

The woman with the wooden leg smiled again, and went out by the back door leading to the court-yard, and where the well was. A moment afterwards the back door was opened again, and a man stood in the doorway. He wore a cap and a blouse. It was easy to see the shape of some-

thing under his blouse. He had bits of old straw in his clothes, and looked as if he had just been aroused from sleep.

He advanced and exchanged glances with the strangers. The man in the blouse looked bewildered, but cunning; he said,

"You are the gunsmith?"

Thé one who had tapped at the window replied, "Yes; you are the man from Paris?"

"Known as Redskin. Yes."

"Show me the thing."

The man took from under his blouse a weapon extremely rare at that period in Europe. It was a revolver.

The weapon was new and bright. The two strangers examined it. The one who seemed to know the house, and whom the man in the blouse had called "the gunsmith," tried the mechanism. He passed the weapon to the other, who appeared less at home there, and kept his back turned to the light.

The gunsmith continued,

"How much?"

The man in the blouse replied,

"I have just brought it from America. Some people bring monkeys, parrots, and other animals, as if the French people were savages. For myself, I brought this. It is a useful invention."

"How much?" inquired the gunsmith again.

"It is a pistol which turns and turns."

"How much?"

"Bang! the first fire. Bang! the second fire. Bang! the third fire. What a hailstorm of bullets! That will do some execution."

"The price?"

"There are six barrels."

"Well, well, what do you want for it?"

"Six barrels; that is six Louis."

"Will you take five?"

"Impossible. One Louis a ball. That is the price."

"Come, let us do business together. Be reasonable."

"I have named a fair price. Examine the weapon, Mr. Gunsmith."

"I have examined it."

"The barrel twists and turns like Talleyrand himself. The weapon ought to be mentioned in the 'dictionary of weathercocks.' It is a gem."

"I have looked at it."

"The barrels are of Spanish make."

"I see they are."

"They are mottled. This is how this mottling is done. They empty into a forge the basket of a collector of old iron. They fill it full of these old scraps, with old nails, and broken horseshoes swept out of farriers' shops."

"And old sickle-blades."

"I was going to say so, Mr. Gunsmith. They apply to all this rubbish a good sweating heat, and this makes a magnificent material for gun-barrels."

"Yes; but it may have cracks, flaws, or crosses."

"True; but they remedy the crosses by little

twists, and avoid the risk of doublings by beating hard. They bring their mass of iron under the great hammer; give it two more good sweating heats. If the iron has been heated too much, they re-temper it with dull heats and lighter hammers. And then they take out their stuff and roll it well; and with this iron they manufacture you a weapon like this."

"You are in the trade, I suppose?"

"I am of all trades."

"The barrels are pale coloured."

"That's the beauty of them, Mr. Gunsmith. The tint is obtained with antimony."

"It is settled, then, that we give you five Louis?"

"Allow me to observe that I had the honour of saying six."

The gunsmith lowered his voice.

"Hark you, master. Take advantage of the opportunity. Get rid of this thing. A weapon of this kind is of no use to a man like you. It will make you remarked."

"It is very true," said the Parisian. "It is rather conspicuous. It is more suited to a gentleman."

"Will you take five Louis?"

"No; six. One for every shot."

"Come, six Napoleons."

"I will have six Louis."

"You are not a Bonapartist, then. You prefer a Louis to a Napoleon."

The Parisian nick-named "Redskin" smiled.

"A Napoleon is greater," said he, "but a Louis is worth more."

"Six Napoleons."

"Six Louis."

"Six Louis. It makes a difference to me of four-and-twenty francs."

"The bargain is off in that case."

"Good; I keep the toy."

"Keep it."

"Beating me down! a good idea! It shall never be said that I got rid like that of a wonderful specimen of ingenuity."

"Good-night, then."

"It marks a whole stage in the progress of making pistols, which the Chesapeake Indians call Nortay-u-Hah."

"Five Louis, ready money. Why, it is a handful of gold."

"*'Nortay-u-Hah,'* that signifies 'short gun.' A good many people don't know that."

"Will you take five Louis, and just a bit of silver?"

"I said six, master."

The man who kept his back to the candle, and who had not yet spoken, was spending his time during the dialogue in turning and testing the mechanism of the pistol. He approached the armoured's ear and whispered,

"Is it a good weapon?"

"Excellent."

"I will give the six Louis."

Five minutes afterwards, while the Parisian, nick-named "Redskin," was depositing the six Louis which he had just received in a secret

slit under the breast of his blouse, the armoured and his companion, carrying the revolver in his trousers pocket, stepped out into the straggling street.

## VIII.

### A "CANNON" OFF THE RED BALL AND THE BLACK.

On the morrow, which was a Thursday, a tragic circumstance occurred at a short distance from St. Malo, near the peak of the "Décollet," a spot where the cliff is high and the sea deep.

A line of rocks in the form of the top of a lance, and connecting themselves with the land by a narrow isthmus, stretch out there into the water, ending abruptly with a large peak-shaped breaker. Nothing is commoner in the architecture of the sea. In attempting from the shore to reach the plateau of the peaked rock, it was necessary to follow an inclined plane, the ascent of which was here and there somewhat steep.

It was upon a plateau of this kind, towards four o'clock in the afternoon, that a man was standing, enveloped in a large military cape, and armed; a fact easy to be perceived from certain straight and angular folds in his mantle. The summit on which this man was resting was a rather extensive platform, dotted with large masses of rock, like enormous paving-stones, leaving between them narrow passages. This platform, on which a kind of thick, short grass grew here and there, came to an end on the sea side in an open space, leading to a perpendicular escarpment. The escarpment, rising about sixty feet above the level of the sea, seemed cut down by the aid of a plumb-line. Its left angle, however, was broken away, and formed one of those natural staircases common to granite cliffs worn by the sea, the steps of which are somewhat inconvenient, requiring sometimes the strides of a giant or the leaps of an acrobat. These stages of rock descended perpendicularly to the sea, where they were lost. It was a break-neck place. However, in case of absolute necessity, a man might succeed in embarking there, under the very wall of the cliff.

A breeze was sweeping the sea. The man, wrapped in his cape and standing firm, with left hand grasping his right shoulder, closed one eye, and applied the other to a telescope. He seemed absorbed in anxious scrutiny. He had approached the edge of the escarpment, and stood there motionless, his gaze immovably fixed on the horizon. The tide was high; the waves were beating below against the foot of the cliffs.

The object which the stranger was observing was a vessel in the offing, and which was manoeuvring in a strange manner. The vessel, which had hardly left the port of St. Malo an hour, had stopped behind the *Banquetiers*. It



had not cast anchor, perhaps because the bottom would only have permitted it to bear to leeward on the edge of the cable, and because the ship would have strained her anchor under the cutwater. Her captain had contented himself with lying-to.

The stranger, who was a coast-guardman, as was apparent from his uniform cape, watched all the movements of the three-master, and seemed to note them mentally. The vessel was lying-to, a little off the wind, which was indicated by the backing of the small topsail, and the bellying of the main-topsail. He had squared the mizen, and set the topmast as close as possible, and in such a manner as to work the sails against each other, and to make little way either on or off shore. He evidently did not care to expose himself much to the wind, for he kept the small mizen topsail perpendicularly to the keel. In this way, coming crossway on, he did not drift at the utmost more than half a league an hour.

It was still broad daylight, particularly on the open sea, and on the heights of the cliff. The shores below were becoming dark.

The coast-guardman, still engaged in his duty, and carefully scanning the offing, had not thought of observing the rocks at his side and at his feet. He turned his back towards the difficult sort of causeway which formed the communication between his resting-place and the shore. He did not, therefore, remark that something was moving in that direction. Behind a fragment of rock, among the steps of that causeway, something like the figure of a man had been concealed, according to all appearances, since the arrival of the coast-guardman. From time to time a head issued from the shadow behind the rock; looked up and watched the watcher. The head, surmounted by a wide-brimmed American hat, was that of the Quaker-looking man, who, ten days before, was talking among the stones of the Petit-Bey to Captain Zuela.

Suddenly, the curiosity of the coast-guardman seemed to be still more strongly awakened. He polished the glass of his telescope quickly with his sleeve, and brought it to bear closely upon the three-master.

A little black spot seemed to detach itself from her side.

The black spot, looking like a small insect upon the water, was a boat.

The boat seemed to be making for the shore. It was manned by several sailors, who were pulling vigorously.

She pulled crosswise by little and little, and appeared to be approaching the Pointe du Décollé.

The gaze of the coast-guardman seemed to have reached its most intense point. No movement of the boat escaped it. He had approached nearer still to the verge of the rock.

At that instant a man of large stature appeared on one of the rocks behind him. It was the Quaker. The officer did not see him.

The man paused an instant, his arms at his sides, but with his fists doubled; and with the eye of a hunter, watching for his prey, he observed the back of the officer.

Four steps only separated them. He put one foot forward, then stopped; took a second step, and stopped again. He made no movements except the act of walking; all the rest of his body was motionless as a statue. His foot fell upon the tufts of grass without noise. He made a third step, and paused again. He was almost within reach of the coast-guard, who stood there still motionless with his telescope. The man brought his two closed fists to a level with his collar-bone, then struck out his arms sharply, and his two fists, as if thrown from a sling, struck the coast-guardman on the two shoulders. The shock was decisive. The man had not the time to utter a cry. He fell head first from the height of the rock into the sea. His boots appeared in the air about the time occupied by a flash of lightning. It was like the fall of a stone in the sea, which instantly closed over him.

Two or three circles widened out upon the dark water.

Nothing remained but the telescope, which had dropped from the hands of the man, and lay upon the turf.

The Quaker leaned over the edge of the escarpment a moment, watched the circles vanishing on the water, waited a few moments, and then rose again, singing, in a low voice,

"The captain of police is dead,  
Through having lost his life."

He knelt down a second time. Nothing reappeared. Only at the spot where the officer had been engulfed, he observed on the surface of the water a sort of dark spot, which became diffused with the gentle lapping of the waves. It seemed probable that the coast-guardman had fractured his skull against some rock under water, and that his blood caused the spot in the foam. The Quaker, while considering the meaning of this spot, began to sing again,

"Not very long before he died,  
The luckless man was still alive."

He did not finish his song.

He heard an extremely soft voice behind him, which said:

"Is that you, Rantaine? Good-day. You have just killed a man!"

He turned. About fifteen paces behind him, in one of the passages between the rocks, stood a little man holding a revolver in his hand.

The Quaker answered,

"As you see. Good-day, *Sieur Clubin*."

The little man started.

"You know me?"

"You knew me very well," replied Rantaine.

Meanwhile they could hear a sound of oars on the sea. It was the approach of the boat which the officer had observed.

*Sieur Clubin* said in a low tone, as if speaking to himself,

"It was done quickly."

"What can I do to oblige you?" asked Rantaine.

"Oh, a trifling matter! It is very nearly ten years since I saw you. You must have been doing well. How are you?"

"Well enough," answered Rantaine. "How are you?"

"Very well," replied Clubin.

Rantaine advanced a step towards Clubin.

A little sharp click caught his ear. It was Sieur Clubin who was cocking his revolver.

"Rantaine, there are about fifteen paces between us. It is a nice distance. Remain where you are."

"Very well," said Rantaine. "What do you want with me?"

"I! Oh, I have come to have a chat with you."

Rantaine did not offer to move again. Sieur Clubin continued:

"You assassinated a coast-guard man just now."

Rantaine lifted the flap of his hat, and replied,

"You have already done me the honour to mention it."

"Exactly; but in terms less precise. I said a man: I say now, a coast-guardman. The man wore the number 619. He was the father of a family; leaves a wife and five children."

"That is no doubt correct," said Rantaine.

There was a momentary pause.

"They are picked men—those coast-guard people," continued Clubin; "almost all old sailors."

"I have remarked," said Rantaine, "that people generally do leave a wife and five children."

Sieur Clubin continued:

"Guess how much this revolver cost me?"

"It is a pretty tool," said Rantaine.

"What do you guess it at?"

"I should guess it at a good deal."

"It cost me one hundred and forty-four francs."

"You must have bought that," said Rantaine, "at the shop in the *ruelle Coutanchez*."

Clubin continued:

"He did not cry out. The fall stopped his voice, no doubt."

"Sieur Clubin, there will be a breeze to-night."

"I am the only one in the secret."

"Do you still stay at the Jean Auberge?"

"Yes; you are not badly served there."

"I remember getting some excellent sour-kraut there."

"You must be exceedingly strong, Rantaine. What shoulders you have! I should be sorry to get a tap from you. I, on the other hand, when I came into the world, looked so spare and sickly that they despaired of rearing me."

"They succeeded though, which was lucky."

"Yes; I still stay at the Jean Auberge."

"Do you know, Sieur Clubin, how I recognized you? It was from your having recognized

me. I said to myself, there is nobody like Sieur Clubin for that."

And he advanced a step.

"Stand back where you were, Rantaine."

Rantaine fell back, and said to himself,

"A fellow becomes like a child before one of those weapons."

Sieur Clubin continued:

"The position of affairs is this: we have on our right, in the direction of St. Enogat, at about three hundred paces from here, another coast-guard man—his number is 618—who is still alive; and on our left, in the direction of Saint Lunaire, a customs station. That makes seven armed men who could be here, if necessary, in five minutes. The rock would be surrounded; the way hither guarded. Impossible to elude them. There is a corpse at the foot of this rock."

Rantaine took a side-way glance at the revolver.

"As you say, Rantaine, it is a pretty tool. Perhaps it is only loaded with powder; but what does that matter? A report would be enough to bring an armed force—and I have six barrels here."

The measured sound of the oars became very distinct. The boat was not far off.

The tall man regarded the little man curiously. Sieur Clubin spoke in a voice more and more soft and subdued.

"Rantaine, the men in the boat which is coming, knowing what you did here just now, would lend a hand and help to arrest you. You are to pay Captain Zuela ten thousand francs for your passage. You would have made a better bargain, by the way, with the smugglers of Pleinmont; but they would only have taken you to England; and, besides, you cannot risk going to Guernsey, where they have the pleasure of knowing you. To return, then, to the position of affairs—if I fire, you are arrested. You are to pay Zuela for your passage ten thousand francs. You have already paid him five thousand in advance. Zuela would keep the five thousand and be gone. These are the facts. Rantaine, you have managed your masquerading very well. That hat—that queer coat—and those gaiters make a wonderful change. You forgot the spectacles. You did right to let your whiskers grow."

Rantaine smiled spasmodically. Clubin continued:

"Rantaine, you have on a pair of American breeches, with a double fob. In one side you keep your watch. Take care of it."

"Thank you, Sieur Clubin."

"In the other is a little box made of wrought iron, which opens and shuts with a spring. It is an old sailor's tobacco-box. Take it out of your pocket, and throw it over to me."

"Why! this is robbery."

"You are at liberty to call the coast-guard-man."

And Clubin fixed his eye on Rantaine.

"Stay, Mess Clubin," said Rantaine, making



a slight forward movement, and holding out his open hand.

The title "Mess" was a delicate flattery.

"Stay where you are, Rantaine."

"Mess Clubin, let us come to terms. I offer you half."

Clubin crossed his arms, still showing the barrels of his revolver.

"Rantaine, what do you take me for? I am an honest man."

And he added, after a pause,

"I must have the whole."

Rantaine muttered between his teeth, "This fellow's of a stern sort."

The eye of Clubin lighted up, his voice became clear and sharp as steel. He cried,

"I see that you are labouring under a mistake. Robbery is your name, not mine. My name is Restitution. Hark you, Rantaine! Ten years ago you left Guernsey one night, taking with you the cash-box of a certain partnership concern, containing fifty thousand francs which belonged to you, but forgetting to leave behind you fifty thousand francs which were the property of another. Those fifty thousand francs, the money of your partner, the excellent and worthy Mess Lethierry, make at present, at compound interest, calculated for ten years, eighty thousand six hundred and sixty-six francs. You went into a money-changer's yesterday. I'll give you his name—Rébuchet, in St. Vincent Street. You counted out to him seventy-six thousand francs in French bank-notes; in exchange for which he gave you three notes of the Bank of England for one thousand pounds sterling each, plus the exchange. You put these bank-notes in the iron tobacco-box, and the iron tobacco-box into your double fob on the right-hand side. On the part of Mess Lethierry, I shall be content with that. I start to-morrow for Guernsey, and intend to hand it to him. Rantaine, the three-master lying to out yonder is the "Tamaulipas." You have had your luggage put aboard there with the other things belonging to the crew. You want to leave France. You have your reasons. You are going to Arequipa. The boat is coming to fetch you. You are awaiting it. It is at hand. You can hear it. It depends on me whether you go or stay. No more words. Fling me the tobacco-box."

Rantaine dipped his hand in the fob, drew out a little box, and threw it to Clubin. It was the iron tobacco-box. It fell and rolled at Clubin's feet.

Clubin knelt without lowering his gaze; felt about for the box with his left hand, keeping all the while his eyes and the six barrels of the revolver fixed upon Rantaine. Then he cried,

"Turn your back, my friend."

Rantaine turned his back.

Sieur Clubin put the revolver under one arm, and touched the spring of the tobacco-box. The lid flew open.

It contained four bank-notes; three of a thousand pounds, and one of ten pounds.

He folded up the three bank-notes of a thousand pounds each, replaced them in the iron tobacco-box, shut the lid again, and put it in his pocket.

Then he picked up a stone, wrapped it in the ten-pound note, and said,

"You may turn round again."

Rantaine turned.

Sieur Clubin continued:

"I told you I would be contented with three thousand francs. Here, I return you ten pounds."

And he threw to Rantaine the note enfolding the stone.

Rantaine, with a movement of his foot, sent the bank-note and the stone into the sea.

"As you please," said Clubin. "You must be rich. I am satisfied."

The noise of oars, which had been continually drawing nearer during the dialogue, ceased. They knew by this that the boat had arrived at the base of the cliff:

"Your vehicle waits below. You can go, Rantaine."

Rantaine advanced towards the steps of stones, and rapidly disappeared.

Clubin moved cautiously towards the edge of the escarpment, and watched him descending.

The boat had stopped near the last stage of the rocks, at the very spot where the coast-guardman had fallen.

Still observing Rantaine stepping from stone to stone, Clubin muttered,

"A good number, 619. He thought himself alone. Rantaine thought there were only two there. I only knew that there were three."

He perceived at his feet the telescope which had dropped from the hands of the coast-guardman.

The sound of oars was heard again. Rantaine had stepped into the boat, and the rowers had pushed out to sea.

When Rantaine was safely in the boat, and the cliff was beginning to recede from his eyes, he arose again sharply. His features were convulsed with rage; he clenched his fist, and cried,

"Ha! he is the devil himself; a villain!"

A few seconds later, Clubin, from the top of the rock, while bringing his telescope to bear upon the boat, heard distinctly the following words articulated by a loud voice, and mingling with the noise of the sea:

"Sieur Clubin, you're an honest man; but you will not be offended if I write to Lethierry to acquaint him with this matter; and we have here in the boat a sailor from Guernsey, who is one of the crew of the 'Tamaulipas'; his name is Ahier-Tostevin, and he will return to St. Malo on Zuela's next voyage, to bear testimony to the fact of my having returned to you, on Mess Lethierry's account, the sum of three thousand pounds sterling."

It was Rantaine's voice.

Clubin rarely did things by halves. Motionless as the coast-guardman had been, and in the

exact same place, his eye still at the telescope, he did not lose sight of the boat for one moment. He saw it growing less amidst the waves; watched it disappear and reappear, and approach the vessel, which was lying-to; and finally he recognised the tall figure of Rantaine on the deck of the "Tamaulipas."

When the boat was raised, and slung again to the davits, the "Tamaulipas" was in motion once more. The land-breeze was fresh, and she spread all her sails. Clubin's glass continued fixed upon her outline growing more and more indistinct, until half an hour later, when the "Tamaulipas" had become only a dark shape upon the horizon, growing smaller and smaller against the pale twilight in the sky.

## IX.

USEFUL INFORMATION FOR PERSONS WHO EXPECT OR FEAR THE ARRIVAL OF LETTERS FROM BEYOND SEA.

ON that evening Sieur Clubin returned late.

One of the causes of his delay was, that before going to his inn, he had paid a visit to the Dinan gate of the town, a place where there were several wine-shops. In one of these wine-shops, where he was not known, he had bought a bottle of brandy, which he placed in the pocket of his overcoat, as if he desired to conceal it. Then, as the Durande was to start on the following morning, he had taken a turn aboard to satisfy himself that everything was in order.

When Sieur Clubin returned to the Jean Auberge, there was no one left in the lower room except the old sea-captain, M. Gertrais-Gabourreau, who was drinking a jug of ale and smoking his pipe.

M. Gertrais-Gabourreau saluted Sieur Clubin between a whiff and a draught of ale.

"How d'ye do, Captain Clubin?"

"Good evening, Captain Gertrais."

"Well, the 'Tamaulipas' is gone."

"Ah!" said Clubin, "I did not observe."

Captain Gertrais-Gabourreau expectorated, and said,

"Zuela has decamped."

"When was that?"

"This evening."

"Where is he gone?"

"To the devil."

"No doubt; but where?"

"To Arequipa."

"I knew nothing of it," said Clubin.

He added,

"I am going to bed."

He lighted his candle, walked towards the door, and returned.

"Have you ever been at Arequipa, Captain?"

"Yes; some years ago."

"Where do they touch on that voyage?"

"A little every where; but the 'Tamaulipas' will touch nowhere?"

M. Gertrais-Gabourreau emptied his pipe upon the corner of a plate, and continued:

"You know the lugger called the 'Trojan Horse,' and that fine three-master, the 'Trentemouzin,' which are gone to Cardiff. I was against their sailing on account of the weather. They have returned in a fine state. The lugger was laden with turpentine; she sprang aleak, and in working the pumps they pumped up with the water all her cargo. As to the three-master, she has suffered most above water. Her cutwater, her headrail, the stock of her larboard anchor are broken. Her standing jibboom is gone clean by the cap. As for the jib-shrouds and bobstays, go and see what they look like. The mizenmast is not injured, but has had a severe shock. All the iron of the bowsprit has given way; and it is an extraordinary fact, that though the bowsprit itself is not scratched, it is completely stripped. The larboard bow of the vessel is stove in a good three feet square. This is what comes of not taking advice."

Clubin had placed the candle on the table, and had begun to readjust a row of pins which he kept in the collar of his overcoat. He continued:

"Didn't you say, Captain, that the 'Tamaulipas' would not touch anywhere?"

"Yes; she goes direct to Chili."

"In that case, she can send no news of herself on the voyage."

"I beg your pardon, Captain Clubin. In the first place, she can send any letters by vessels she may meet sailing for Europe."

"That is true."

"Then there is the ocean letter-box."

"What do you mean by the ocean letter-box?"

"Don't you know what that is, Captain Clubin?"

"No."

"When you pass the Straits of Magellan—"

"Well."

"Snow all around you; always bad weather; ugly down-easters, and bad seas."

"Well."

"When you have doubled Cape Monmouth—"

"Well, what next?"

"Then you double Cape Valentine."

"And then?"

"Why, then you double Cape Isidore."

"And afterwards?"

"You double Point Anne."

"Good. But what is it you call the ocean letter-box?"

"We are coming to that. Mountains on the right, mountains on the left. Penguins and stormy petrels all about. A terrible place. Ah! by Jove, what a howling and what cracks you get there! The hurricane wants no help. That's the place for holding on to the sheer-rails—for reefing topsails. That's where you take in the mainsail, and fly the jibsail; or take in the jibsail and try the storm-jib. Gusts upon gusts! And then, sometimes four, five, or six



days of *cap sèche*. Often only a rag of canvas left. What a dance! Squalls enough to make a three-master skip like a flea. I saw once a cabin-boy hanging on to the jibboom of an English brig, 'The True Blue,' knocked, jibboom and all, to ten thousand nothings. Fellows are swept into the air there like butterflies. I saw the second mate of the 'Revenue,' a pretty schooner, knocked from under the fore cross-tree, and killed dead. I have had my sheer-rails smashed, and come out with all my sails in ribbons. Frigates of fifty guns make water like wicker baskets. And the damnable coast! Nothing can be imagined more dangerous. Rocks all jagged edged. You come, by-and-by, to Port Famine. There it's worse and worse. The worst seas I ever saw in my life. The devil's own latitudes. All of a sudden you spy the words, painted in red, 'Post Office.'"

"What do you mean, Captain Gertrai?"

"I mean, Captain Clubin, that immediately after doubling Point Anne you see, on a rock, a hundred feet high, a great post with a barrel suspended to the top. This barrel is the letter-box. The English sailors must needs go and write up there 'Post Office.' What had they to do with it? It is the ocean post-office. It isn't the property of that worthy gentleman, the King of England. The box is common to all. It belongs to every flag. *Post Office*: there's a crack-jaw word for you. It produces an effect on me as if the devil had suddenly offered me a cup of tea. I will tell you now how the postal arrangements are carried out. Every vessel which passes sends to the post a boat with despatches. A vessel coming from the Atlantic, for instance, sends there its letters for Europe; and a ship coming from the Pacific, its letters for New Zealand or California. The officer in command of the boat puts his packet into the barrel, and takes away any packet he finds there. You take charge of these letters, and the ship which comes after you takes charge of

yours. As ships are always going to and fro, the continent whence you come is that to which I am going. I carry your letters; you carry mine. The barrel is made fast to the post with a chain. And it rains, snows, and hails! A pretty sea. The imps of Satan fly about on every side. The 'Tamanlipas' will pass there. The barrel has a good lid with a hinge, but no padlock. You see, a fellow can write to his friends this way. The letters come safely."

"It is very curious," muttered Clubin, thoughtfully.

Captain Gertrai-Gabourreau returned to his bottle of ale.

"If that vagabond Zuela should write, the scoundrel puts his scrawl into the barrel at Magellan, and in four months I have his letter."

"Well, Captain Clubin, do you start to-morrow?"

Clubin, absorbed in a sort of somnambulism, did not notice the question, and Captain Gertrai repeated it.

Clubin woke up.

"Of course, Captain Gertrai. It is my day. I must start to-morrow morning."

"If it was my case, I shouldn't, Captain Clubin. The hair of the dog's coat feels damp. For two nights past, the sea-birds have been flying wildly round the lantern of the lighthouse. A bad sign. I have a storm-glass, too, which gives me a warning. The moon is at her second quarter; it is the maximum of humidity. I noticed to-day some pimpnells with their leaves shut, and a field of clover with its stalks all stiff. The worms come out of the ground to-day; the flies sting; the bees keep close to their hives; the sparrows chatter together. You can hear the sound of bells from far off. I heard to-night the Angelus at St. Lunaire. And then the sun set angry. There will be a good fog to-morrow, mark my words. I don't advise you to put to sea. I dread the fog a good deal more than a hurricane. It's a nasty neighbour that."

## BOOK VI.

### THE DRUNKEN STEERSMAN AND THE SOBER CAPTAIN.

#### I.

##### THE DOUVRES.

At about five leagues out, in the open sea, to the south of Guernsey, opposite Pleinmont Point, and between the Channel Islands and St. Malo, there is a group of rocks, called the Douvres. The spot is dangerous.

This term Douvres, applied to rocks and cliffs, is very common. There is, for example, near the *Côtes du Nord*, a Douvre, on which a lighthouse is now being constructed; a dangerous reef, but one which must not be confounded with the rock above referred to.

The nearest point on the French coast to the Douvres is Cape Bréhat. The Douvres are a little further from the coast of France than from the nearest of the Channel Islands. The distance from Jersey may be pretty nearly measured by the long diagonal of Jersey. If the Island of Jersey could be turned round upon Corbière, as upon a hinge, St. Catherine's Point would almost touch the Douvres, at a distance of more than four leagues.

In these civilized regions the wildest rocks are rarely desert places. Smugglers are met with at Hagot, custom-house men at Binie, Celts at Bréhat, oyster-dredgers at Cancale,

rabbit-shooters at Césambre or Cæsar's Island, crab-gatherers at Brecqhou, trawlers at the Minquiers, dredgers at Ecréhou, but no one is ever seen upon the Douvres.

The sea-birds alone make their home there.

No spot in the ocean is more dreaded. The Casquets, where it is said the "Blanche Nef" was lost; the Bank of Calvado; the Needles in the Isle of Wight; the Roncesse, which makes the coast of Beaulieu so dangerous; the sunken reefs at Prél, which block the entrance to Merquel, and which necessitates the red-painted beacon in twenty fathoms of water, the treacherous approaches to Etables and Plouha; the two Druids of granite to the south of Guernsey, the Old Anderlo and the Little Anderlo, the Corbière, the Hanways, the Isle of Ras, associated with terror in the proverb:

*"Si jamais tu passes le Ras,  
Si tu ne meurs, tu tremblera;"*

the Mortes-Femmes, the Déroute between Guernsey and Jersey, the Hardent between the Minquiers and Chousey, the Mauvais Cheval between Bouley Bay and Barneville, have not so evil a reputation. It would be preferable to have to encounter all these dangers, one after the other, than the Douvres once.

In all that perilous sea of the Channel, which is the Egean of the West, the Douvres have no equal in their terrors, except the Paternoster between Guernsey and Sark.

From the Paternoster, however, it is possible to give a signal—a ship in distress there may obtain succour. To the north rises Discard or D'Icare Point, and to the south Grosnez. From the Douvres you can see nothing.

Its associations are the storm, the cloud, the wild sea, the desolate waste, the uninhabited coast. The blocks of granite are hideous and enormous—everywhere perpendicular wall—the severe inhospitality of the abyss.

It is the open sea; the water about is very deep. A rock completely isolated like the Douvres attracts and shelters creatures which shun the haunts of men. It is a sort of vast submarine cave of fossil coral branches—a drowned labyrinth. There, at a depth to which divers would find it difficult to descend, are caverns, haunts, and dusky mazes, where monstrous creatures multiply and destroy each other. Huge crabs devour fish and are devoured in their turn. Hideous shapes of living things, not created to be seen by human eyes, wander in this twilight. Vague forms of antennæ, tentacles, fins, open jaws, scales, and claws, float about there, quivering, growing larger, or decomposing and perishing in the gloom, while horrible swarms of swimming things prowl about seeking their prey.

To gaze into the depths of the sea is, in the imagination, like beholding the vast unknown, and from its most terrible point of view. The submarine gulf is analogous to the realm of night and dreams. There also is sleep, unconsciousness, or at least apparent unconsciousness, of creation. There, in the awful silence and

darkness, the rude first forms of life, phantom-like, demoniacal, pursue their horrible instincts.

Forty years ago, two rocks of singular form signalled the Douvres from afar to passers on the ocean. They were two vertical points, sharp and curved, their summits almost touching each other. They looked like the two tusks of an elephant rising out of the sea; but they were tusks, high as tall towers, of an elephant huge as a mountain. These two natural towers, rising out of the obscure home of marine monsters, only left a narrow passage between them, where the waves rushed through. This passage, tortuous and full of angles, resembled a straggling street between high walls. The two twin rocks are called the Douvres. There was the Great Douvre and the Little Douvre; one was sixty feet high, the other forty. The ebb and flow of the tide had at last worn away part of the base of the towers, and a violent equinoctial gale on the 26th of October, 1859, overthrew one of them. The smaller one, which still remains, is worn and tottering.

One of the most singular of the Douvres is a rock known as "The Man." This still exists. Some fishermen in the last century visiting this spot found on the height of this rock a human body. By its side were a number of empty sea-shells. A sailor escaped from shipwreck had found a refuge there; had lived some time upon rock limpets, and had died. Hence its name of "The Man."

The solitudes of the sea are peculiarly dismal. The things which pass there seem to have no relation to the human race; their objects are unknown. Such is the isolation of the Douvres. All around, as far as eye can reach, spreads the vast and restless sea.

## II.

### AN UNEXPECTED FLASK OF BRANDY.

ON the Friday morning, the day after the departure of the "Tamaulipas," the Durande started again for Guernsey.

She left St. Malo at nine o'clock. The weather was fine; no haze. Old Captain Gertrai-Gabourreau was evidently in his dotage.

Sieur Clubin's numerous occupations had decidedly been unfavourable to the collection of freight for the Durande. He had only taken aboard some packages of Parisian articles for the fancy shops of St. Peter's Port; three cases for the Guernsey hospital, one containing yellow soap and long candles, and the other French shoe-leather for soles, and choice Cordovan skins. He brought back from his last cargo a case of crushed sugar and three chests of congou tea, which the French custom-house would not permit to pass. Sieur Clubin had embarked very few cattle; some bullocks only. These bullocks were in the hold loosely tethered.

There were six passengers aboard; a Guernsey man, two inhabitants of St. Malo, dealers in



cattle; a "tourist"—a phrase already in vogue at this period—a Parisian citizen, probably traveling on commercial affairs, and an American, engaged in distributing Bibles.

Without reckoning Clubin, the crew of the Durande amounted to seven men; a helmsman, a stoker, a ship's carpenter, and a cook—serving as sailors in case of need—two engineers, and a cabin-boy. One of the two engineers was also a practical mechanic. This man, a bold and intelligent Dutch negro, who had originally escaped from the sugar plantations of Surinam, was named Imbrancam. The negro, Imbrancam, understood and attended admirably to the engine. In the early days of the "Devil Boat," his black face, appearing now and then at the top of the engine-room stairs, had contributed not a little to sustain its diabolical reputation.

The helmsman, a native of Guernsey, but of a family originally from Cotentin, bore the name of Tangrouille. The Tangrouilles were an old noble family.

This was strictly true. The Channel Islands are like England, an aristocratic region. Castes exist there still. The castes have their peculiar ideas, which are, in fact, their protection. These notions of caste are every where similar; in Hindostan, as in Germany, nobility is won by the sword, lost by soiling the hands with labour, but is preserved by idleness. To do nothing is to live nobly; whoever abstains from work is honoured. A trade is fatal. In France, in old times, there was no exception to this rule, except in the case of glass manufacturers. Emptying bottles being then one of the glories of gentlemen, making them was probably, for that reason, not considered dishonourable. In the Channel archipelago, as in Great Britain, he who would remain noble must contrive to be rich. A working man can not possibly be a gentleman. If he has ever been one, he is so no longer. Yonder sailor, perhaps, descends from the Knights Bannerets, but is nothing but a sailor. Thirty years ago, a real Gorges, who would have had rights over the Seigniory of Gorges, confiscated by Philip Augustus, gathered sea-weed, naked-footed, in the sea. A Carteret is a wagoner in Sark. There are at Jersey a draper, and at Guernsey a shoemaker, named Gruchy, who claim to be Gruchys, and cousins of the Marshal of Waterloo. The old registers of the Bishopric of Coutances make mention of a Seigniory of Tangrouille, evidently from Tancarville, on the Lower Seine, which is identical with Montmorency. In the fifteenth century, Johan de Héroudeville, archer and *étouffe* of the Sire de Tangrouille, bore behind him "*son corset et ses autres harnois*." In May, 1371, at Pontorson, at the review of Bertrand de Guesclin, Monsieur de Tangrouille rendered his homage as Knight Bachelor. In the Norman islands, if a noble falls into poverty, he is soon eliminated from the order. A mere change of pronunciation is enough. Tangrouille becomes Tangrouille: the thing is done.

This had been the fate of the helmsman of the Durande.

At the Bordagé of St. Peter's Port, there is a dealer in old iron, named Ingrouille, who is probably an Ingroville. Under Louis le Gros, the Ingroilles possessed three parishes in the district of Valognes. A certain Abbé Trigan has written an Ecclesiastical History of Normandy. This chronicler Trigan was the curé of the Seigniory of Digoville. The Sire of Digoville, if he had sunk to a lower grade, would have been called Digouille.

Tangrouille, this probable Tancarville, and possible Montmorency, had an ancient noble quality, but a grave failing for a steersman—he got drunk occasionally.

Sieur Clubin had obstinately determined to retain him. He answered for his conduct to Mess Lethierry.

Tangrouille the helmsman never left the vessel; he slept aboard.

On the eve of their departure, when Sieur Clubin came at a late hour to inspect the vessel, Tangrouille was in his hammock asleep.

In the night Tangrouille awoke. It was his nightly habit. Every drunkard who is not his own master has his secret hiding-place. Tangrouille had his, which he called his store. The secret store of Tangrouille was in the hold. He had placed it there to put others off the scent. He thought it certain that his hiding-place was known only to himself. Captain Clubin, being a sober man himself, was strict. The little rum or gin which the helmsman could conceal from the vigilant eyes of the captain, he kept in reserve in this mysterious corner of the hold, and nearly every night he had a stolen interview with the contents of this store. The surveillance was rigorous, the orgie was a poor one, and Tangrouille's nightly excesses were generally confined to two or three furtive gulps. Sometimes it happened that the store was empty. This night Tangrouille had found there an unexpected bottle of brandy. His joy was great, but his astonishment greater. From what cloud had this bottle fallen? He could not remember when or how he had ever brought it into the ship. He soon consumed the whole of it, partly from motives of prudence, and partly from a fear that the brandy might be discovered and seized. The bottle he threw overboard. In the morning, when he took the helm, Tangrouille exhibited a slight oscillation of the body.

He steered, however, pretty nearly as usual.

With regard to Clubin, he had gone, as the reader knows, to sleep at the Jean Auberger.

Clubin always wore, under his shirt, a leathern travelling belt, in which he kept a reserve of twenty guineas: he took this belt off only at night. Inside the belt was his name, "Clubin," written by himself on the rough leather, with thick lithographers' ink, which is indelible.

On rising, just before his departure, he put into this girdle the iron box containing the seventy-five thousand francs in bank-notes; then,

as he was accustomed to do, he buckled the belt round his body.

### III.

#### CONVERSATIONS INTERRUPTED.

THE *Durande* started pleasantly. The passengers, as soon as their bags and portmanteaus were installed upon and under the benches, took that customary survey of the vessel which seems indispensable under the circumstances. Two of the passengers—the tourist and the Parisian—had never seen a steam vessel before, and from the moment the paddles began to revolve, they stood admiring the foam. Then they looked with wonderment at the smoke. Then they examined, one by one, and almost piece by piece, upon the upper and lower deck, all those naval appliances—such as rings, grappels, hooks, and bolts—which, with their nice precision and adaptation, form a kind of colossal *bifouterie*—a kind of iron jewellery gilded with rust by the weather. They walked round the little signal gun upon the upper deck. “Chained up like a sporting dog,” observed the tourist. “And covered with a waterproof coat to prevent its taking cold,” added the Parisian. As they left the land further behind, they indulged in the customary observations upon the view of St. Malo. One passenger laid down the axiom that the approach to a place by sea is always deceptive; and that at a league from the shore, for example, nothing could more resemble Ostend than Dunkirk. He completed his series of remarks on Dunkirk by the observation that one of its two floating lights, painted red, was called *Ruytingen*, and the other *Mardyeck*.

St. Malo, meanwhile, grew smaller in the distance, and finally disappeared from view.

The aspect of the sea was a vast calm. The furrow left in the water by the vessel, a long double line edged with foam, and stretching in a straight line behind them as far as the eye could see.

A straight line drawn from St. Malo in France to Exeter in England would touch the island of Guernsey. The straight line at sea is not always the one chosen. Steam vessels, however, have, to a certain extent, a power of following the direct course—denied to sailing ships.

The wind, in co-operation with the sea, is a combination of forces. A ship is a combination of appliances. Forces are machines of infinite power. Machines are forces of limited power. That struggle which we call navigation is between these two organizations—the one inexhaustible, the other intelligent.

Mind, directing the mechanism, forms the counterbalance to the infinite power of the opposing forces. But the opposing forces, too, have their organization. The elements are conscious of where they go, and what they are about. No force is merely blind. It is the function of man to keep watch upon these natural agents, and to discover their laws.

While these laws are still in great part undiscovered, the struggle continues, and in this struggle navigation, by the help of steam, is a perpetual victory won by human skill every hour of the day, and upon every point of the sea. The admirable feature in steam navigation is, that it disciplines the very ship herself. It diminishes her obedience to the winds, and increases her docility to man.

The *Durande* had never worked better at sea than on that day. She made her way marvelously.

Towards eleven o'clock, a fresh breeze blowing from the nor'-nor'-west, the *Durande* was off the Minquiers, under little steam, keeping her head to the west, on the starboard tack, and close up to the wind. The weather was still fine and clear. The trawlers, however, were making for shore.

By little and little, as if each one was anxious to get into port, the sea became clear of the boats.

It could not be said that the *Durande* was keeping quite her usual course. The crew gave no thought to such matters. The confidence in the captain was absolute; yet, perhaps through the fault of the helmsman, there was a slight deviation. The *Durande* appeared to be making rather towards Jersey than Guernsey. A little after eleven the captain rectified the vessel's course, and put her head fair for Guernsey. It was only a little time lost, but in short days time lost has its inconveniences. It was a February day, but the sun shone brightly.

Tangrouille, in his half-intoxicated state, had not a very sure arm, nor a very firm footing. The result was, that the helmsman lurched prettily often, which also retarded progress.

The wind had almost entirely fallen.

The Guernsey passenger, who had a telescope in his hand, brought it to bear from time to time upon a little cloud of gray mist, lightly moved by the wind, in the extreme western horizon. It resembled a fleecy down sprinkled with dust.

Captain Clubin wore his ordinary austere, Puritan-like expression of countenance. He appeared to redouble his attention.

All was peaceful and almost joyous aboard the *Durande*. The passengers chatted. It is possible to judge of the state of the sea in a passage with the eyes closed, by noting the tremolo of the conversation about you. The full freedom of mind among the passengers answers to the perfect tranquillity of the waters.

It is impossible, for example, that a conversation like the following could take place otherwise than on a very calm sea.

“Observe that pretty green and red fly.”

“It has lost itself out at sea, and is resting on the ship.”

“Flies do not soon get tired.”

“No doubt; they are light; the wind carries them.”

“An ounce of flies was once weighed, and afterwards counted; and it was found to comprise no less than six thousand two hundred and sixty-eight.”



The Guernsey passenger with the telescope had approached the St. Malo cattle-dealers, and their talk was something in this vein:

"The Aubrac bull has a round and thick buttock, short legs, and a yellowish hide. He is slow at work by reason of the shortness of his legs."

"In that matter the Salers beats the Aubrac."

"I have seen, Sir, two beautiful bulls in my life. The first has the legs low, the breast thick, the rump full, the haunches large, a good length of neck to the udder, withers of good height, the skin easy to strip. The second had all the signs of good fattening, a thickset back, neck and shoulders strong, coat white and brown, rump sinking."

"That's the Cotentin race."

"Yes; with a slight cross with the Angus or Suffolk bull."

"You may believe if you please, Sir, but I assure you in the south they hold shows of donkeys."

"Shows of donkeys?"

"Of donkeys, on my honour. And the ugliest are the most admired."

"Ha! it is the same as with the mule shows. The ugly ones are considered best."

"Exactly. Take also the Poitevin mares; large belly, thick legs."

"The best mule known is a sort of barrel upon four posts."

"Beauty in beasts is a different thing from beauty in men."

"And particularly in women."

"That is true."

"As for me, I like a woman to be pretty."

"I am more particular about her being well dressed."

"Yes; neat, clean, and well set off."

"Looking just new. A pretty girl ought always to appear as if she had just been turned out by the jeweller."

"To return to my bulls; I saw these two sold at the market at Thouars."

"The market at Thouars; I know it very well. The Bonneaus of La Rochelle, and the Babus corn-merchants at Marais, I don't know whether you have heard of them attending that market."

The tourist and the Parisian were conversing with the American of the Bibles.

"Sir," said the tourist, "I will tell you the tonnage of the civilized world. France, 716,000 tons; Germany, 1,000,000; the United States, 5,000,000; England, 5,500,000; add the small vessels. Total, 12,904,000 tons, carried in 145,000 vessels, scattered over the waters of the globe."

The American interrupted:

"It is the United States, Sir, which have 5,500,000."

"I defer," said the tourist. "You are an American?"

"Yes, Sir."

"I defer still more."

There was a pause. The American mission-

ary was considering whether this was a case for the offer of a Bible.

"Is it true, Sir," asked the tourist, "that you have a passion for nick-names in America so complete that you confer them upon all your celebrated men? and that you call your famous Missouri banker, Thomas Benton, 'Old Bullion,' just as you call Zachary Taylor 'Old Zach'?"

"And General Harrison, 'Old Tip'; am I right? and General Jackson, 'Old Hickory'?"

"Because Jackson is hard as hickory wood; and because Harrison beat the redskins at *Tippicanoe*."

"It is an odd fashion, that of yours."

"It is our custom. We call Van Buren 'The Little Wizard'; Seward, who introduced the small bank-notes, 'Little Billy'; and Douglas, the Democrat, senator from Illinois, who is four feet high, and very eloquent, 'The Little Giant.' You may go from Texas to the State of Maine without hearing the name of Mr. Cass. They say 'The Great Michigander'; nor the name of Clay; they say 'The Miller's Boy of the Slashes.' Clay is the son of a miller."

"I should prefer to say 'Clay' or 'Cass,'" said the Parisian. "It's shorter."

"Then you would be out of the fashion. We call Corwin, who is the Secretary of the Treasury, 'The Wagoner-boy'; Daniel Webster, 'Black Dan.' As to Winfield Scott, as his first thought, after beating the English at Chippeway, was to sit down to dine, we call him 'Hasty Basin of Soup.'"

The small white mist perceived in the distance had become larger. It filled now a segment of fifteen degrees above the horizon. It was like a cloud loitering along the water for want of wind to stir it. The breeze had almost entirely died away. The sea was glassy. Although it was not yet noon, the sun was becoming pale. It lighted, but seemed to give no warmth.

"I fancy," said the tourist, "that we shall have a change of weather."

"Probably rain," said the Parisian.

"Or fog," said the American.

"In Italy," remarked the tourist, "Molfetta is the place where falls the least rain, and Tolmezzo where there falls the most."

At noon, according to the usage of the Channel Islands, the bell sounded for dinner. Those dined who desired. Some passengers had brought with them provisions, and were eating merrily on the after-deck. Clubin did not eat.

While this eating was going on, the conversations continued.

The Guernsey man, having probably a scent for Bibles, approached the American. The latter said to him,

"You know this sea?"

"Very well; I belong to this part."

"And I too," said one of the St. Malo men.

The native of Guernsey followed with a bow, and continued:

"We are fortunately well out at sea now;

I should not have liked a fog when we were off the Minquiers."

The American said to the St. Malo man,

"Islanders are more at home on the sea than the folks of the coast."

"True; we coast people are only half dipped in salt water."

"What are the Minquiers?" asked the American.

The St. Malo man replied,

"They are an ugly reef of rocks."

"There are also the Grelets," said the Guernsey man.

"Parbleu!" ejaculated the other.

"And the Chouas," added the Guernsey man.

The inhabitant of St. Malo laughed.

"As for that," said he, "there are the Savages also."

"And the Monks," observed the Guernsey man.

"And the Duck," cried the St. Maloite.

"Sir," remarked the inhabitant of Guernsey, "you have an answer for everything."

The tourist interposed with a question:

"Have we to pass all that legion of rocks?"

"No; we have left it to the sou'-south-east. It is behind us."

And the Guernsey passenger continued:

"Big and little rocks together, the Grelets have fifty-seven peaks."

"And the Minquiers forty-eight," said the other.

The dialogue was now confined to the St. Malo and the Guernsey passenger.

"It strikes me, Monsieur St. Malo, that there are three rocks which you have not included."

"I mentioned all."

"From the Derée to the Maitre Ile?"

"And Les Maisons?"

"Yes; seven rocks in the midst of the Minquiers."

"I see you know the very stones."

"If I didn't know the stones, I should not be an inhabitant of St. Malo."

"It is amusing to hear French people's reasonings."

The St. Malo man bowed in his turn, and said,

"The Savages are three rocks."

"And the Monks two."

"And the Duck one."

"The Duck; this is only one, of course."

"No; for the Suarde consists of four rocks."

"What do you mean by the Suarde?" asked the inhabitant of Guernsey.

"We call the Suarde what you call the Chouas."

"It is a queer passage, that between the Chouas and the Duck."

"It is impassable except for the birds."

"And the fish."

"Scarcely: in bad weather they give themselves hard knocks against the walls."

"There is sand near the Minquiers?"

"Around Les Maisons."

"There are eight rocks visible from Jersey."

"Visible from the strand of Azette; that's correct; but not eight—only seven."

"At low water you can walk about the Minquiers."

"No doubt; there would be sand above water."

"And what of the Dirouilles?"

"The Dirouilles bear no resemblance to the Minquiers."

"They are very dangerous."

"They are near Granville."

"I see that you St. Malo people, like us, enjoy sailing in these seas."

"Yes," replied the St. Malo man, "with the difference that we say, 'We have the habit;' you, 'We are fond.'"

"You make good sailors."

"I am myself a cattle-merchant."

"Who was that famous sailor of St. Malo?"

"Surcouf?"

"Another?"

"Duguay-Trouin."

Here the Parisian commercial man chimed in,

"Duguay-Trouin? He was captured by the English. He was as agreeable as he was brave. A young English lady fell in love with him. It was she who procured him his liberty."

At this moment a voice like thunder was heard crying out,

"You are drunk, man!"

#### IV.

CAPTAIN CLUBIN DISPLAYS ALL HIS GREAT QUALITIES.

EVERYBODY turned.

It was the captain calling to the helmsman.

Sieur Clubin's tone and manner evidenced that he was extremely angry, or that he wished to appear so.

A well-timed burst of anger sometimes removes responsibility, and sometimes shifts it on other shoulders.

The captain, standing on the bridge between the two paddle-boxes, fixed his eyes on the helmsman. He repeated, between his teeth, "Drunkard." The unlucky Tangrouille hung his head.

The fog had made progress. It filled by this time nearly one half of the horizon. It seemed to advance from every quarter at the same time. There is something in a fog of the nature of a drop of oil upon the water. It enlarged insensibly. The light wind moved it onward slowly and silently. By little and little, it took possession of the ocean. It was coming chiefly from the north-west, dead ahead: the ship had it before her prow, like a line of cliff moving vast and vague. It rose from the sea like a wall. There was an exact point where the wide waters entered the fog, and were lost to sight.



This line of the commencement of the fog was still above half a league distant. The interval was visibly growing less and less. The Durande made way; the fog made way also. It was drawing nearer to the vessel, while the vessel was drawing nearer to it.

Clubin gave the order to put on more steam, and to hold off the coast.

Thus, for some time, they skirted the edge of the fog; but still it advanced. The vessel, meanwhile, sailed in broad sunlight.

Time was lost in these manœuvres, which had little chance of success. Nightfall comes quickly in February. The native of Guernsey was meditating upon the subject of this fog. He said to the St. Malo men,

"It will be thick."

"An ugly sort of weather at sea," observed one of the St. Malo men.

The other added,

"A kind of thing which spoils a good passage."

The Guernsey passenger approached Clubin, and said,

"I'm afraid, Captain, that the fog will catch us."

Clubin replied,

"I wished to stay at St. Malo, but I was advised to go."

"By whom?"

"By some old sailors."

"You were certainly right to go," said the Guernsey man. "Who knows whether there will not be a tempest to-morrow? At this season you may wait and find it worse."

A few moments later, the Durande entered the fog bank.

The effect was singular. Suddenly those who were on the after-deck could not see those forward. A soft gray medium divided the ship in two.

Then the entire vessel passed into the fog. The sun became like a dull red moon. Everybody suddenly shivered. The passengers put on their overcoats, and the sailors their tarpaulins. The sea, almost without a ripple, was the more menacing from its cold tranquillity. All was pale and wan. The black funnel and the heavy smoke struggled with the dewy mist which enshrouded the vessel.

Dropping to westward was now useless. The captain kept the vessel's head again towards Guernsey, and gave orders to put on the steam.

The Guernsey passenger, hanging about the engine-room hatchway, heard the negro Imbrancam talking to his engineer comrade. The passenger listened. The negro said,

"This morning, in the sun, we were going half steam on; now, in the fog, we put on steam."

The Guernsey man returned to Clubin:

"Captain Clubin, a look-out is useless; but have we not too much steam on?"

"What can I do, sir? We must make up for time lost through the fault of that drunkard of a helmsman."

"True, Captain Clubin."

And Clubin added,

"I am anxious to arrive. It is foggy enough by day; it would be rather too much at night."

The Guernsey man rejoined his St. Malo fellow-passengers, and remarked,

"We have an excellent captain."

At intervals, great waves of mist bore down heavily upon them, and blotted out the sun, which again issued out of them pale and sickly. The little that could be seen of the heavens resembled the long strips of painted sky, dirty and smeared with oil, among the old scenery of a theatre.

The Durande passed close to a cutter which had cast anchor for safety. It was the "Shealtiel" of Guernsey. The master of the cutter remarked the high speed of the steam vessel. It struck him also that she was not in her exact course. She seemed to him to bear to westward too much. The apparition of this vessel under full steam in the fog surprised him.

Towards two o'clock the weather had become so thick that the captain was obliged to leave the bridge, and plant himself near the steersman. The sun had vanished, and all was fog. A sort of ashy darkness surrounded the ship. They were navigating in a pale shroud. They could see neither sky nor water.

There was not a breath of wind.

The can of turpentine suspended under the bridge, between the paddle-boxes, did not even oscillate.

The passengers had become silent.

The Parisian, however, hummed between his teeth the song of Béranger—"Un jour le bon Dieu s'éveillant."

One of the St. Malo passengers addressed him:

"You are from Paris, sir?"

"Yes, sir. *Il mit la tête à la fenêtre.*"

"What do they do in Paris?"

"*Leur planète a péri, peut-être.*" In Paris, sir, things are going on very badly.

"Then it's the same ashore as at sea."

"It is true; we have an abominable fog here."

"One which might involve us in misfortunes."

The Parisian exclaimed,

"Yes; and why all these misfortunes in the world? Misfortunes! What are they sent for, these misfortunes? What use do they serve? There was the fire at the Odéon theatre, and immediately a number of families thrown out of employment. Is that just? I don't know what is your religion, sir, but I am puzzled by all this."

"So am I," said the St. Malo man.

"Everything that happens here below," continued the Parisian, "seems to go wrong. It looks as if Providence, for some reason, no longer watched over the world."

The St. Malo man scratched the top of his head, like one making an effort to understand. The Parisian continued:

"Our guardian angel seems to be absent.

There ought to be a decree against celestial absenteeism. He is at his country-house, and takes no notice of us; so all goes wrong. It is evident that this guardian is not in the government; he is taking holiday, leaving some vicar—some seminarist-angel, some wretched creature with sparrows'-wings—to look after affairs."

Captain Clubin, who had approached the speakers during this conversation, laid his hand upon the shoulder of the Parisian:

"Silence, sir," he said. "Keep a watch upon your words. We are upon the sea."

No one spoke again aloud.

After a pause of five minutes, the Guernsey man, who had heard all this, whispered in the ear of the St. Malo passenger,

"A religious man, our captain."

It did not rain, but all felt their clothing wet. The crew took no heed of the way they were making; but there was increased sense of uneasiness. They seemed to have entered into a doleful region. The fog makes a deep silence on the sea; it calms the waves, and stifles the wind. In the midst of this silence, the creaking of the *Durande* communicated a strange, indefinable feeling of melancholy and disquietude.

They passed no more vessels. If afar off, in the direction of Guernsey or in that of St. Malo, any vessels were at sea outside the fog, the *Durande*, submerged in the dense cloud, must have been invisible to them; while her long trail of smoke, attached to nothing, looked like a black comet in the pale sky.

Suddenly Clubin roared out,

"Hang-dog! you have played us an ugly trick. You will have done us some damage before we are out of this. You deserve to be put in irons. Get you gone, drunkard!"

And he seized the helm himself.

The steersman, humbled, shrunk away to take part in the duties forward.

The Guernsey man said,

"That will save us."

The vessel was still making way rapidly.

Towards three o'clock, the lower part of the fog began to clear, and they could see the sea again.

A mist can only be dispersed by the sun or the wind. By the sun is well; by the wind is not so well. At three o'clock in the afternoon, in the month of February, the sun is always weak. A return of the wind at this critical point in a voyage is not desirable. It is often the forerunner of a hurricane.

If there was any breeze, however, it was scarcely perceptible.

Clubin, with his eye on the binnacle, holding the tiller and steering, muttered to himself some words like the following, which reached the ears of the passengers:

"No time to be lost; that drunken rascal has retarded us."

His visage, meanwhile, was absolutely without expression.

The sea was less calm under the mist. A

few waves were distinguishable. Little patches of light appeared on the surface of the water. These luminous patches attract the attention of the sailors. They indicate openings made by the wind in the overhanging roof of fog. The cloud rose a little, and then sunk heavier. Sometimes the density was perfect. The ship was involved in a sort of foggy iceberg. At intervals this terrible circle opened a little, like a pair of pincers; showed a glimpse of the horizon, and then closed again.

Meanwhile the Guernsey man, armed with his spy-glass, was standing like a sentinel in the fore part of the vessel.

An opening appeared for a moment, and was blotted out again.

The Guernsey man returned alarmed.

"Captain Clubin!"

"What is the matter?"

"We are steering right upon the Hanways."

"You are mistaken," said Clubin, coldly.

The Guernsey man insisted:

"I am sure of it."

"Impossible."

"I have just seen the rock in the horizon."

"Where?"

"Out yonder."

"It is the open sea there. Impossible."

And Clubin kept the vessel's head to the point indicated by the passenger.

The Guernsey man seized his spy-glass again.

"Captain!"

"Well."

"Tack about."

"Why."

"I am certain of having seen a very high rock just ahead. It is the Great Hanways."

"You have seen nothing but a thicker bank of fog."

"It is the Great Hanways. Tack, in the name of Heaven!"

Clubin gave the helm a turn.

## V.

### CLUBIN REACHES THE CROWNING-POINT OF GLORY.

A CRASH was heard. The ripping of a vessel's side upon a sunken reef in open sea is the most dismal sound of which man can dream. The *Durande's* course was stopped short.

Several passengers were knocked down with the shock and rolled upon the deck.

The Guernsey man raised his hands to heaven:

"We are on the Hanways. I predicted it."

A long cry went up from the ship:

"We are lost."

The voice of Clubin, dry and short, was heard above all:

"No one is lost. Silence!"

The black form of Imbrancam, naked down to the waist, issued from the hatchway of the engine-room.



The negro said with self-possession, "The water is gaining, Captain. The fires will soon be out."

The moment was terrible.

The shock was like that of a suicide. If the disaster had been wilfully sought, it could not have been more terrible. The *Durande* had rushed upon her fate as if she had attacked the rock itself. A point had pierced her sides like a wedge. More than six feet square of planking had gone; the stem was broken, the prow smashed, and the gaping hull drank in the sea with a horrible gulping noise. It was an entrance for wreck and ruin. The rebound was so violent that it had shattered the rudder pendants; the rudder itself hung unhinged and flapping. The rock had driven in her bottom. Round about the vessel nothing was visible except a thick, compact fog, now become sombre. Night was gathering fast.

The *Durande* plunged forward. It was like the effort of a horse pierced through the entrails by the horn of a bull. All was over with her.

Tangrouille was sobered. Nobody is drunk in the moment of a shipwreck. He came down to the quarter-deck, went up again, and said,

"Captain, the water is gaining rapidly in the hold. In ten minutes the water will be up to the scupper-holes."

The passengers ran about bewildered, wringing their hands, leaning over the bulwarks, looking down in the engine-room, and making every other sort of useless movement in their terror. The tourist had fainted.

Clubin made a sign with his hand and they were silent. He questioned Imbrancam:

"How long will the engines work yet?"

"Five or six minutes, sir."

Then he interrogated the Guernsey passenger:

"I was at the helm. You saw the rock. On which bank of the Hanways are we?"

"On the Mauve. Just now, in the opening in the fog, I saw it clearly."

"If we're on the Mauve," remarked Clubin, "we have the Great Hanways on the port side, and the Little Hanways on the starboard bow; we are a mile from the shore."

The crew and passengers listened, fixing their eyes anxiously and attentively on the Captain.

Lightening the ship would have been of no avail, and indeed would have been hardly possible. In order to throw the cargo overboard, they would have had to open the ports, and increase the chance of the water entering. To cast anchor would have been equally useless: they were stuck fast. Besides, with such a bottom for the anchor to drag, the chain would probably have fouled. The engines not being injured, and being workable as long as the fires were not extinguished, that is to say, for a few minutes longer, they could have made an effort, by help of steam and her paddles, to turn her astern off the rocks; but if they had succeeded, they must have settled down immedi-

ately. The rock, indeed, in some degree, stopped the breach and prevented the entrance of the water. It was, at least, some obstacle; while the hole once freed, it would have been impossible to stop the leak or to work the pumps. To snatch a poniard from a wound in the heart is instant death to the victim. To free themselves from the rock would be simply to founder.

The cattle, on whom the water was gaining in the hold, were lowing piteously.

Clubin issued orders:

"Launch the long-boat."

Imbrancam and Tangrouille rushed to execute the order. The boat was eased from her fastening. The rest of the crew looked on stupefied.

"All hands to assist," cried Clubin.

This time all obeyed.

Clubin, self-possessed, continued to issue his orders in that old sea dialect, which French sailors of the present day would scarcely understand.

"Haul in a rope—Get a cable if the capstan does not work—Stop heaving—Keep the blocks clear—Lower away there—Bring her down stern and bows—Now, then, all together, lads—Take care she don't lower stern first—There's too much strain on there—Hold the lanyard of the stock tackle—Stand by, there!"

The long-boat was launched.

At that instant the *Durande's* paddles stopped, and the smoke ceased—the fires were drowned.

The passengers slipped down the ladder, and dropped hurriedly into the long-boat. Imbrancam lifted the fainting tourist, carried him into the boat, and then boarded the vessel again.

The crew made a rush after the passengers; the cabin-boy was knocked down, and the others were treading upon his body.

Imbrancam barred their passage.

"Not a man before the lad," he said.

He kept off the sailors with his two black arms, picked up the boy, and handed him down to the Guernsey man, who was standing upright in the boat.

The boy saved, Imbrancam made way for the others, and said,

"Pass on!"

Meanwhile Clubin had entered his cabin, and had made up a parcel containing the ship's papers and instruments. He took the compass from the binnacle, handed the papers and instruments to Imbrancam, and the compass to Tangrouille, and said to them,

"Get aboard the boat."

They obeyed. The crew had taken their places before them.

"Now," cried Clubin, "push off."

A cry arose from the long-boat,

"What about yourself, Captain?"

"I will remain here."

Shipwrecked people have little time to deliberate, and not much for indulging in tender feeling. Those who were in the long-boat, and in comparative safety, however, felt an emotion which was not altogether selfish. All the voices shouted together,

"Come with us, Captain."

"No; I remain here."

The Guernsey man, who had some experience of the sea, replied,

"Listen to me, Captain. You are wrecked on the Hanways. Swimming, you would have only a mile to cross to Pleinmont. In a boat, you can only land at Rocquaine, which is two miles. There are breakers, and there is the fog. Our boat will not get to Rocquaine in less than two hours. It will be dark night. The sea is rising, the wind getting fresh. A squall is at hand. We are now ready to return and bring you off; but if bad weather comes on, that will be out of our power. You are lost if you stay there. Come with us."

The Parisian chimed in,

"The long-boat is full—too full, it is true, and one more will certainly be one too many; but we are thirteen—a bad number for the boat, and it is better to overload her with a man than to take an ominous number. Come, Captain."

Tangrouille added,

"It was all my fault, not yours, Captain. It isn't fair for you to be left behind."

"I have decided to remain here," said Clubin. "The vessel must inevitably go to pieces in the tempest to-night. I won't leave her. When the ship is lost, the Captain is already dead. People shall not say I didn't do my duty to the end. Tangrouille, I forgive you."

Then, folding his arms, he cried,

"Obey orders! Let go the cable, and push off!"

The long-boat swayed to and fro. Imbran-cam had seized the tiller. All the hands which were not rowing were raised towards the Captain; every mouth cried, "Cheers for Captain Clubin."

"An admirable fellow!" said the American.

"Sir," replied the Guernsey man, "he is one of the worthiest seamen afloat."

Tangrouille shed tears.

"If I had had the courage," he said, "I would have stayed with him."

The long-boat pushed away, and was lost in the fog.

Nothing more was visible.

The beat of the oars grew fainter, and died away.

Clubin remained alone.

## VI.

### THE INTERIOR OF AN ABYSS SUDDENLY REVEALED.

WHEN Clubin found himself upon this rock, in the midst of the fog and the wide waters, far from all sound of human life, left for dead, alone with the tide rising around him, and night settling down rapidly, he experienced a feeling of profound satisfaction.

He had succeeded.

His dream was realized at last. The accept-

ance which he had drawn upon destiny at so long a date had fallen due at last.

With him, to be abandoned there, was, in fact, to be saved.

He was on the Hanways; one mile from the shore; he had about him seventy-five thousand francs. Never was shipwreck more scientifically accomplished. Nothing had failed. It is true, everything had been foreseen. From his early years Clubin had had an idea to stake his reputation for honesty at life's gaming-table; to pass as a man of high honour, and to make that reputation his fulcrum for other things; to bide his time, to watch his opportunity; not to grope about blindly, but to seize boldly; to venture on one great stroke, only one; and to end by sweeping off the stakes, leaving fools behind him to gape and wonder. What stupid rogues fail in twenty times, he meant to accomplish at the first blow; and while they terminated a career at the gallows, he intended to finish with a fortune. The meeting with Raintaine had been a new light to him. He had immediately laid his plan—to compel Raintaine to disgorge; to frustrate his threatened revelations by disappearing; to make the world believe him dead, the best of all modes of concealment; and for this purpose to wreck the *Durande*. The shipwreck was absolutely necessary to his designs. Lastly, he had the satisfaction of vanishing, leaving behind him a great renown, the crowning point of his existence. As he stood meditating on these things amid the wreck, Clubin might have been taken for some demon in a pleasant mood.

He had lived a lifetime for the sake of this one minute.

His whole exterior was expressive of the two words—"At last." A devilish tranquillity reigned in that sallow countenance.

His dull eye, the depth of which generally seemed to be impenetrable, became clear and terrible. The inward fire of his dark spirit was reflected there.

Man's inner nature, like that external world about him, has its electric phenomena. An idea is like a meteor; at the moment of its coming, the confused meditations which preceded it open a way, and a spark flashes forth; bearing within one's self a power of evil, feeling an inward prey, brings to some minds a pleasure, which is like a sparkle of light. The triumph of an evil purpose brightens up their visages. The success of certain cunning combinations, the attainment of certain cherished objects, the gratification of certain ferocious instincts, will manifest themselves in sinister but luminous appearances in their eyes. It is like a threatening dawn, a gleam of joy drawn out of the heart of a storm. These flashes are generated in the conscience in its states of cloud and darkness.

Some such signs were then exhibiting themselves in the pupils of those eyes. They were like nothing else that can be seen shining either above or here below.



All-Clubin's pent up wickedness found full vent now.

He gazed into the vast surrounding darkness, and indulged in a low, irrepressible laugh, full of sinister significance.

He was rich at last! rich at last!

The unknown future of his life was at length unfolding; the problem was solved.

Clubin had plenty of time before him. The sea was rising, and consequently sustained the Durande, and even raised her at last a little. The vessel kept firmly in its place among the rocks; there was no danger of her foundering. Besides, he determined to give the long-boat time to get clear off—to go to the bottom, perhaps. Clubin hoped it might.

Erect upon the deck of the shipwrecked vessel, he folded his arms, apparently enjoying that forlorn situation in the dark night.

Hypocrisy had weighed upon this man for thirty years. He had been evil itself, yoked with probity for a mate. He detested virtue with the feeling of one who has been trapped into a hateful match. He had always had a wicked premeditation; from the time when he attained manhood he had worn the cold and rigid armour of appearances. Underneath this was the demon of self. He had lived like a bandit in the disguise of an honest citizen. He had been the soft-spoken pirate; the bond-slave of honesty. He had been confined in garments of innocence as in oppressive mummy cloths; had worn those angel wings which the devils find so wearisome in their fallen state. He had been overloaded with public esteem. It is arduous passing for a shining light. To preserve a perpetual equilibrium amid these difficulties, to think evil, to speak goodness—here had been indeed a labour. Such a life of contradictions had been Clubin's fate. It had been his lot—not the less onerous because he had chosen it himself—to preserve a good exterior, to be always presentable, to foam in secret, to smile while grinding his teeth. Virtue presented itself to his mind as something stifling. He had felt, sometimes, as if he could have gnawed those finger-ends which he was compelled to keep before his mouth.

To live a life which is a perpetual falsehood is to suffer unknown tortures. To be premeditating indefinitely a diabolical act; to have to assume austerity; to brood over secret infamy seasoned with outward good fame; to have continually to put the world off the scent; to present a perpetual illusion, and never to be one's self—is a burdensome task. To have to dip the brush in that dark stuff within, to produce with it a portrait of candour; to fawn, to restrain and suppress one's self, to be ever on the *qui vive*; watching without ceasing, to mask latent crimes with a face of healthy innocence; to transform deformity into beauty; to fashion wickedness into the shape of perfection; to tickle as it were with the point of a dagger, to put sugar with poison, to keep a bridle on every gesture and a watch over every tone, not even to have a

countenance of one's own—what can be harder, what can be more torturing? The odiousness of hypocrisy is obscurely felt by the hypocrite himself. Drinking perpetually of his own imposture is nauseating. The sweetness of tone which cunning gives to scoundrelism is repugnant to the scoundrel compelled to have it ever in the mouth; and there are moments of nausea when villainy seems on the point of vomiting its secret. To have to swallow that bitter saliva is horrible. Add to this picture his profound pride. There are strange moments in the history of such a life, when hypocrisy worships itself. There is always an inordinate egotism in roguery. The worm has the same mode of gliding along as the serpent, and the same manner of raising its head. The treacherous villain is the despot curbed and restrained, and only able to attain his ends by resigning himself to play a secondary part. He is summed-up littleness capable of enormities. The perfect hypocrite is a Titan dwarfed.

Clubin had a genuine faith that he had been ill-used. Why had not he the right to have been born rich? It was from no fault of his that it was otherwise. Deprived as he had been of the higher enjoyments of life, why had he been forced to labour—in other words, to cheat, to betray, to destroy? Why had he been condemned to this torture of flattering, cringing, fawning; to be always labouring for men's respect and friendship, and to wear night and day a face which was not his own? To be compelled to dissimulate was in itself to submit to a hardship. Men hate those to whom they have to lie. But now the disguise was at an end. Clubin had now taken his revenge.

On whom? On all! On everything!

Lethierry had never done him any but good services; so much the greater his spleen. He was revenged upon Lethierry.

He was revenged upon all those in whose presence he had felt constraint. It was his turn to be free now. Whoever had thought well of him was his enemy. He had felt himself their captive long enough.

Now he had broken through his prison walls. His escape was accomplished. That which would be regarded as his death, would be, in fact, the beginning of his life. He was about to begin the world again. The true Clubin had stripped off the false. In one hour the spell was broken. He had kicked Rantaine into space; overwhelmed Lethierry in ruin; human justice in night, and opinion in error. He had cast off all humanity; blotted out the whole world.

The name of God, that word of three letters, occupied his mind but little.

He had passed for a religious man. What was he now?

There are secret recesses in hypocrisy; or rather the hypocrite is himself a secret recess.

When Clubin found himself quite alone, that cavern in which his soul had so long lain hidden was opened. He enjoyed a moment of delicious

liberty. He revelled for that moment in the open air. He gave vent to himself in one long breath.

The depth of evil within him revealed itself in his visage. He expanded, as it were, with diabolical joy. The features of Rantaine by the side of his at that moment would have shown like the innocent expression of a new-born child.

What a deliverance was this plucking off of the old mask. His conscience rejoiced in the sight of its own monstrous nakedness, as it stepped forth to take its hideous bath of wickedness. The long restraint of men's respect seemed to have given him a peculiar relish for infamy. He experienced a certain lascivious enjoyment of wickedness. In those frightful moral abysses so rarely sounded, such natures find atrocious delights—they are the obscenities of rascality. The long-endured insipidity of the false reputation for virtue gave him an appetite for shame. In this state of mind, men disdain their fellows so much that they even long for the contempt which marks the ending of their unmerited bondage. They feel a satisfaction in the freedom of degradation, and cast an eye of envy at baseness, sitting at its ease, clothed in ignominy and shame. Eyes that are forced to droop modestly are familiar with these stealthy glances at sin. From Messalina to Marie-Alacoque the distance is not great. Remember the histories of La Cadière and the nun of Louviers. Clubin, too, had worn the veil. Effrontery had always been the object of his secret admiration. He envied the painted courtesan, and the face of bronze of the professional ruffian. He felt a pride in surpassing her in artifices, and a disgust for the trick of passing for a saint. He had been the Tantalus of Cynicism. And now, upon this rock, in the midst of this solitude, he could be frank and open. A bold plunge into wickedness—what a voluptuous sense of relief it brought with it. All the delights known to the fallen angels are summed up in this; and Clubin felt them at that moment. The long arrears of dissimulations were paid at last. Hypocrisy is an investment; the devil reimburses it. Clubin gave himself up to the intoxication of the idea, having no longer any eye upon him but that of Heaven. He whispered within himself, "I am a scoundrel," and felt profoundly satisfied.

Never had human conscience experienced such a full tide of emotions.

He was glad to be entirely alone, and yet would not have been sorry to have had some one there. He would have been pleased to have had a witness of his fiendish joy—gratified to have had opportunity of saying to society, "Thou fool!"

The solitude, indeed, assured his triumph, but it made it less.

He was not himself to be spectator of his glory. Even to be in the pillory has its satisfaction, for everybody can see your infamy.

To compel the crowd to stand and gape is, in fact, an exercise of power. A malefactor stand-

ing upon a platform in the market-place, with the collar of iron round his neck, is master of all the glances which he constrains the multitude to turn towards him. There is a pedestal on yonder scaffolding. To be there—the centre of universal observation—is not this, too, a triumph? To direct the pupil of the public eye, is this not another form of supremacy? For those who worship an ideal wickedness, opprobrium is glory. It is a height from whence they can look down; a superiority at least of some kind; a pre-eminence in which they can display themselves royally. A gallows standing high in the gaze of all the world is not without some analogy with a throne. To be exposed is, at least, to be seen and studied.

Herein we have evidently the key to the wicked reigns of history. Nero burning Rome, Louis Quatorze treacherously seizing the Palatinate, the Prince Regent killing Napoleon slowly, Nicholas strangling Poland before the eyes of the civilized world, may have felt something akin to Clubin's joy. Universal execration derives a grandeur even from its vastness.

To be unmasked is a humiliation; but to unmask one's self is a triumph. There is an intoxication in the position, an insolent satisfaction in its contempt for appearances, a flaunting insolence in the nakedness with which it affronts the decencies of life.

These ideas in a hypocrite appear to be inconsistent, but in reality are not. All infamy is logical. Honey is gall. A character like that of Escobar has some affinity with that of the Marquis de Sade. In proof, we have Léotade. A hypocrite, being a personification of vice complete, includes in himself the two poles of perversity. Priest-like on one side, he resembles the courtesan on the other. The sex of his diabolical nature is double. It engenders and transforms itself. Would you see it in its pleasing shape? Look at it. Would you see it horrible? Turn it round.

All this multitude of ideas was floating confusedly in Clubin's mind. He analyzed them little, but he felt them much.

A whirlwind of flakes of fire, borne up from the pit of hell into the dark night, might fitly represent the wild succession of ideas in his soul.

Clubin remained thus some time, pensive and motionless. He looked down upon his cast-off virtues as a serpent on its old skin.

Every body had had faith in that virtue; even he himself a little.

He laughed again.

Society would imagine him dead, while he was rich. They would believe him drowned, while he was saved. What a capital trick to have played off on the stupidity of the world.

Rantaine, too, was included in that universal stupidity. Clubin thought of Rantaine with an unmeasured disdain: the disdain of the marten for the tiger. The trick had failed with Rantaine—it had succeeded with him, Clubin. Rantaine had slunk away abashed; Clubin dis-



appeared in triumph. He had substituted himself for Rantaine—stepped between him and his mistress, and carried off her favours.

As to the future, he had no well-settled plan. In the iron tobacco-box in his girdle he had the three bank-notes. The knowledge of that fact was enough. He would change his name. There are plenty of countries where sixty thousand francs are equal to six hundred thousand. It would be no bad solution to go to one of those corners of the world, and live there honestly on the money disgorged by that scoundrel Rantaine. To speculate, to embark in commerce, to increase his capital, to become really a millionaire, that, too, would be no bad termination to his career.

For example, the great trade in coffee from Costa Rica was just beginning to be developed. There were heaps of gold to be made there. He would see.

It was of little consequence. He had plenty of time to think of it. The hardest part of the enterprise was accomplished. Stripping Rantaine, and disappearing with the wreck of the *Durande*, were the grand achievements. All the rest was for him simple. No obstacle henceforth was likely to stop him. He had nothing more to fear. He could reach the shore with certainty by swimming. He would land at Pleinmont in the darkness; ascend the cliffs; go straight to the old haunted house; enter it easily by the help of the knotted cord, concealed beforehand in a crevice of the rocks; would find in the house his travelling-bag, containing provisions and dry clothing. There he could await his opportunity. He had information. A week would not pass without the Spanish smugglers, Blasquito probably, touching at Pleinmont. For a few guineas he would obtain a passage, not to Torbay—as he had said to Blasco, to confound conjecture, and put him off the scent—but to Bilbao or Passages. Thence he could get to Vera Cruz or New Orleans. But the moment had come for taking to the water. The long-boat was far enough by this time. An hour's swimming was nothing for Clubin. The distance of a mile only separated him from the land, as he was on the Hanways.

At this point in Clubin's meditations, a clear opening appeared in the fog-bank. The formidable *Douvres* rocks stood before him.

## VII.

### AN UNEXPECTED DÉNOÛEMENT.

CLUBIN, haggard, stared straight ahead.

It was indeed those terrible and solitary rocks.

It was impossible to mistake their misshapen outlines. The two twin *Douvres* reared their forms aloft, hideously revealing the passage between them like a snare—a cut-throat in ambush in the ocean.

They were quite close to him. The fog, like an artful accomplice, had hidden them until now.

Clubin had mistaken his course in the dense mist. Notwithstanding all his pains, he had experienced the fate of two other great navigators—Gonzalez, who discovered Cape Blanco, and Fernandez, who discovered Cape Verde. The fog had bewildered him. It had seemed to him, in the confidence of his seamanship, to favour admirably the execution of his project; but it had its perils. In veering to westward he had lost his reckoning. The Guernsey man, who fancied that he recognized the Hanways, had decided his fate, and determined him to give the final turn to the tiller. Clubin had never doubted that he had steered the vessel on the Hanways.

The *Durande's* stove in by one of the sunken rocks of the group, was only separated from the two *Douvres* by a few cables' lengths.

At two hundred fathoms farther was a massive block of granite. Upon the steep sides of this rock were some hollows and small projections which might help a man to climb. The square corners of those rude walls at right angles indicated the existence of a plateau on the summit.

It was the height known by the name of "The Man."

"The Man" rock rose even higher still than the *Douvres*. Its platform commanded a view over their two inaccessible peaks. This platform, crumbling at its edges, had every kind of irregularity of shape. No place more desolate or more dangerous could be imagined. The hardly perceptible waves of the open sea lapped gently against the square sides of that dark, enormous mass—a sort of resting-place for the vast spectres of the sea and darkness.

All around was calm. Scarcely a breath of air or a ripple. The mind guessed darkly the hidden life and vastness of the depths beneath that quiet surface.

Clubin had often seen the *Douvres* from afar.

He satisfied himself that he was indeed there. He could not doubt it.

A sudden and hideous change of affairs. The *Douvres* instead of the Hanways. Instead of one mile, five leagues of sea! The *Douvres* to the solitary shipwrecked sailor is the visible and palpable presence of death—the extinction of all hope of reaching land.

Clubin shuddered. He had placed himself voluntarily in the jaws of destruction. No other refuge was left him than "The Man" rock. It was probable that a tempest would arise in the night, and that the long-boat, overloaded as she was, would sink. No news of the shipwreck then would come to land. It would not even be known that Clubin had been left upon the *Douvres*. No prospect was now before him but death from cold and hunger. His seventy-five thousand francs would not purchase him a mouthful of bread. All the scaffolding he had built up had brought him only to this snare. He alone was the laborious architect of this crowning catastrophe. No resource—no possi-

ble escape; his triumph transformed into a fatal precipice. Instead of deliverance, a prison; instead of the long prosperous future, agony. In the glance of an eye, in the moment which the lightning occupies in passing, all his construction had fallen into ruins. The paradise dreamed of by this demon had changed to its true form of a sepulchre.

Meanwhile there had sprung up a movement in the air. The wind was rising. The fog, shaken, driven in, and torn, moved towards the horizon in vast shapeless masses. As quickly as it had disappeared before, the sea became once more visible.

The cattle, more and more invaded by the waters, continued to bellow in the hold.

Night was approaching, probably bringing with it a storm.

The *Durande*, filling slowly with the rising tide, swung from right to left, then from left to right, and began to turn upon the rock as upon a pivot.

The moment could be foreseen when a wave must move her from her fixed position, and probably roll her over on her beam-ends.

It was not even so dark as at the instant of her striking the rocks. Though the day was more advanced, it was possible to see more clearly. The fog had carried away with it some part of the darkness. The west was without a cloud. Twilight brings a pale sky. Its vast reflection glimmered on the sea.

The *Durande's* bows were lower than her stern. Her stern was, in fact, almost out of the water. Clubin mounted on her taffrail, and fixed his eyes on the horizon.

It is the nature of hypocrisy to be sanguine. The hypocrite is one who waits his opportunity. Hypocrisy is nothing, in fact, but a horrible hopefulness; the very foundation of its revolting falsehood is composed of that virtue transformed into a vice.

Strange contradiction. There is a certain trustfulness in hypocrisy. The hypocrite confides in some power, unrevealed even to himself, which permits the course of evil.

Clubin looked far and wide over the ocean.

The position was desperate, but that evil spirit did not yet despair.

He knew that after the fog, vessels that had been lying-to or riding at anchor would resume their course; and he thought that perhaps one would pass within the horizon.

And, as he had anticipated, a sail appeared.

She was coming from the east and steering towards the west.

As it approached, the cut of the vessel became visible. It had but one mast, and was schooner rigged. Her bowsprit was almost horizontal. It was a cutter.

Before half an hour she must pass not very far from the *Douvres*.

Clubin said within himself, "I am saved!"

In a moment like this, a man thinks at first of nothing but his life.

The cutter was probably a strange craft. Might it not be one of the smuggling vessels on its way to *Pleinmont*? It might even be *Blasquito* himself. In that case, not only life, but fortune would be saved; and the accident of the *Douvres*, by hastening the conclusion, by dispensing with the necessity for concealment in the haunted house, and by bringing the adventure to a dénouement at sea, would be turned into a happy incident.

All his original confidence of success returned fanatically to his sombre mind.

It is remarkable how easily knaves are persuaded that they deserve to succeed.

There was but one course to take.

The *Durande*, entangled among the rocks, necessarily mingled her outline with them, and confounded herself with their irregular shapes, among which she formed only one more mass of lines. Thus become indistinct and lost, she would not suffice, in the little light which remained, to attract the attention of the crew of the vessel which was approaching.

But a human form standing up, black against the pale twilight of the sky, upon "the Man Rock," and making signs of distress, would doubtless be perceived, and the cutter would then send a boat to take the shipwrecked man aboard.

"The Man" was only two hundred fathoms off. To reach it by swimming was simple, to climb it easy.

There was not a minute to lose.

The bows of the *Durande* being low between the rocks, it was from the height of the poop where Clubin stood that he had to jump into the sea. He began by taking a sounding, and discovered that there was great depth just under the stern of the wrecked vessel. The microscopic shells of foraminifera which the adhesive matter on the lead-line brought up were intact, indicating the presence of very hollow caves under the rocks, in which the water was tranquil, however great the agitation of the surface.

He undressed, leaving his clothing on the deck. He knew that he would be able to get clothing when aboard the cutter.

He retained nothing but his leather belt.

As soon as he was stripped, he placed his hand upon this belt, buckled it more securely, felt for the iron tobacco-box, took a rapid survey in the direction which he would have to follow among the breakers and the waves to gain "the Man Rock;" then precipitating himself head first, he plunged into the sea.

As he dived from a height, he plunged heavily.

He sank deep in the water, touched the bottom, skirted for a moment the submarine rocks, then struck out to regain the surface.

At that moment he felt himself seized by one foot.



## BOOK VII.

## THE DANGER OF OPENING A BOOK AT RANDOM.

## I.

## THE PEARL AT THE FOOT OF A PRECIPICE.

A FEW moments after his short colloquy with *Sieur Landoys*, *Gilliatt* was at *St. Sampson*.

He was troubled, even anxious. What could it be that had happened?

There was a murmur in *St. Sampson* like that of a startled hive. Everybody was at his door. The women were talking loud. There were people who seemed relating some occurrence, and who were gesticulating. A group had gathered around them. The words could be heard, "What a misfortune!" Some faces wore a smile.

*Gilliatt* interrogated no one. It was not in his nature to ask questions. He was, moreover, too much moved to speak to strangers. He had no confidence in rumours. He preferred to go direct to the *Bravées*.

His anxiety was so great that he was not even deterred from entering the house.

The door of the great lower room opening upon the Quay, moreover, stood wide open. There was a swarm of men and women on the threshold. Everybody was going in, and *Gilliatt* went with the rest.

Entering, he found *Sieur Landoys* standing near the door-posts.

"You have heard, no doubt, of this event?"

"No."

"I did not like to call it out to you on the road. It makes one like a bird of evil omen."

"What has happened?"

"The *Durande* is lost."

There was a crowd in the great room.

The various groups spoke low, like people in a sick-chamber.

The assemblage, which consisted of neighbours, the first comers, curious to learn the news, huddled together near the door with a sort of timidity, leaving clear the bottom of the room, where appeared *Déruchette* sitting and in tears. *Mess Lethierry* stood beside her.

His back was against the wall at the end of the room. His sailor's cap came down over his eyebrows. A lock of gray hair hung upon his cheek. He said nothing. His arms were motionless; he seemed scarcely to breathe. He had the look of something lifeless placed against the wall.

It was easy to see in his aspect a man whose life had been crushed within him. The *Durande* being gone, *Lethierry* had no longer any object in his existence. He had had a being on the sea; that being had suddenly foundered. What could he do now? Rise every morning; go to sleep every night. Never more to await

the coming of the *Durande*; to see her get under way, or steer again into the port. What was a remainder of existence without object? To drink, to eat, and then? He had crowned the labours of his life by a masterpiece: won by his devotion a new step in civilization. The step was lost; the masterpiece destroyed. To live a few vacant years longer! where would be the good? Henceforth nothing was left for him to do. At his age men do not begin life anew. Besides, he was ruined. Poor old man!

*Déruchette*, sitting near him on a chair and weeping, held one of *Mess Lethierry's* hands in hers. Her hands were joined; his hand was clenched fast. It was the sign of the shade of difference in their two sorrows. In joined hands there is still some token of hope, in the clenched fist none.

*Mess Lethierry* gave up his arm to her, and let her do with it what she pleased. He was passive. Struck down by a thunderbolt, he had scarcely a spark of life left within him.

There is a degree of overwhelmment which abstracts the mind entirely from its fellowship with man. The forms which come and go within your room become confused and indistinct. They pass by, even touch you, but never really come near you. You are far away; inaccessible to them, as they to you. The intensities of joy and despair differ in this. In despair, we take cognizance of the world only as something dim and afar off; we are insensible to the things before our eyes; we lose the feeling of our own existence. It is in vain, at such times, that we are flesh and blood; our consciousness of life is none the more real; we are become, even to ourselves, nothing but a dream.

*Mess Lethierry's* gaze indicated that he had reached this state of absorption.

The various groups were whispering together. They exchanged information as far as they had gathered it. This was the substance of their news.

The *Durande* had been wrecked the day before in the fog on the *Douvres*, about an hour before sunset. With the exception of the captain, who refused to leave his vessel, the crew and passengers had all escaped in the long-boat. A squall from the south-west springing up as the fog had cleared, had almost wrecked them a second time, and had carried them out to sea beyond *Guernsey*. In the night they had had the good fortune to meet with the "*Cashmere*," which had taken them aboard and landed them at *St. Peter's Port*. The disaster was entirely the fault of the steersman *Tangrouille*, who was in prison. *Clubin* had behaved nobly.

The pilots, who had mustered in great force, pronounced the words "The Douvres" with a peculiar emphasis. "A dreary half-way house, that," said one.

A compass and a bundle of registers and memorandum-books lay on the table; they were doubtless the compass of the *Durande* and the ship's papers, handed by Clubin to Imbrancam and Tangrouille at the moment of the departure of the long-boat. They were the evidences of the magnificent self-abnegation of that man who had busied himself with saving these documents even in the presence of death itself—a little incident full of moral grandeur; an instance of sublime self-forgetfulness never to be forgotten.

They were unanimous in their admiration of Clubin; unanimous also in believing him to be saved after all. The "*Shealtiel*" cutter had arrived some hours after the "*Cashmere*." It was this vessel which brought the last items of intelligence. She had passed four-and-twenty hours in the same waters as the *Durande*. She had lain-to in the fog, and tacked about during the squall. The captain of the "*Shealtiel*" was present among the company.

This captain had just finished his narrative to Lethierry as Gilliat entered. The narrative was a true one. Towards the morning, the storm having abated and the wind becoming manageable, the captain of the "*Shealtiel*" had heard the lowing of oxen in the open sea. This rural sound in the midst of the waves had naturally startled him. He steered in that direction, and perceived the *Durande* among the Douvres. The sea had sufficiently subsided for him to approach. He hailed the wreck; the bellowing of the cattle was the sole reply. The captain of the "*Shealtiel*" was confident that there was no one aboard the *Durande*. The wreck still held together well, and, notwithstanding the violence of the squall, Clubin could have passed the night there. He was not the man to leave go his hold very easily. He was not there, however; and therefore he must have been rescued. It was certain that several sloops and luggers, from Granville and St. Malo, must, after laying-to in the fog on the previous evening, have passed pretty near the rocks. It was evident that one of these had taken Clubin aboard. It was to be remembered that the long-boat of the *Durande* was full when it left the unlucky vessel; that it was certain to encounter great risks; that another man aboard would have overloaded her, and perhaps caused her to founder; and that these circumstances had no doubt weighed with Clubin in coming to his determination to remain on the wreck. His duty, however, once fulfilled, and a vessel at hand, Clubin assuredly would not have scrupled to avail himself of its aid. A hero is not necessarily an idiot. The idea of a suicide was absurd in connection with a man of Clubin's irreproachable character. The culprit, too, was Tangrouille, not Clubin. All this was conclusive. The captain of the "*Shealtiel*" was evidently right, and everybody expected to see Clubin reappear very shortly. There was a

project abroad to carry him through the town in triumph.

Two things appeared certain from the narrative of the captain: Clubin was saved; the *Durande* lost.

As regarded the *Durande*, there was nothing for it but to accept the fact; the catastrophe was irremediable. The captain of the "*Shealtiel*" had witnessed the last moments of the wreck. The sharp rock on which the vessel had been, as it were, nailed, had held her fast during the night, and resisted the shock of the tempest as if reluctant to part with its prey; but in the morning, at the moment when the captain of the "*Shealtiel*" had convinced himself that there was no one on board to be saved, and was about to wear off again, one of those seas which are like the last angry blows of a tempest had struck her. The wave lifted her violently from her place, and with the swiftness and directness of an arrow from a bow had thrown her against the two Douvres rocks. "An infernal crash was heard," said the captain. The vessel, lifted by the wave to a certain height, had plunged between the two rocks up to her midship frame. She had stuck fast again, but more firmly than on the submarine rocks. She must have remained there 'suspended, and exposed to every wind and sea.

The *Durande*, according to the statements of the crew of the "*Shealtiel*," was already three parts broken up. She would evidently have foundered during the night if the rocks had not kept her up. The captain of the "*Shealtiel*" had watched her a long time with his spy-glass. He gave, with naval precision, the details of her disaster. The starboard quarter beaten in, the masts maimed, the sails blown from the bolt-ropes, the shrouds torn away, the cabin skylights smashed by the falling of one of the booms, the dome of the cuddy-house beaten in, the chocks of the long-boat struck away, the round-house overturned, the hinges of the rudder broken, the trusses wrenched away, the quarter-cloths demolished, the bits gone, the cross-beam destroyed, the shear-rails knocked off, the stern-post broken. As to the parts of the cargo made fast before the foremast, all destroyed, made a clean sweep of, gone to ten thousand shivers, with top ropes, iron pulleys, and chains. The *Durande* had broken her back; the sea now must break her up piecemeal. In a few days there would be nothing of her remaining.

It appeared that the engine was scarcely injured by all these ravages—a remarkable fact, and one which proved its excellence. The captain of the "*Shealtiel*" thought he could affirm that the crank had received no serious injury. The vessel's masts had given way, but the funnel had resisted everything. Only the iron guards of the captain's gangway were twisted; the paddle-boxes had suffered; the frames were bruised, but the paddles had not a float missing. The machinery was intact. Such was the conviction of the captain of the "*Shealtiel*." Imbrancam, the engineer, who was among the



crowd, had the same conviction. The negro, more intelligent than many of his white companions, was proud of his engines. He lifted up his arms, opening the ten fingers of his black hands, and said to Lethierry, as he sat there silent, "Master, the machinery is alive still!"

The safety of Clubin seeming certain, and the hull of the *Durande* being already sacrificed, the engines became the topic of conversation among the crowd. They took an interest in it as in a living thing. They felt a delight in praising its good qualities. "That's what I call a well-built machine," said a French sailor. "Something like a good one," cried a Guernsey fisherman. "She must have some good stuff in her," said the captain of the "Shealtiel," "to come out of that affair with only a few scratches."

By degrees the machinery of the *Durande* became the absorbing object of their thoughts. Opinions were warm for and against. It had its enemies and its friends. More than one who possessed a good old sailing cutter, and who hoped to get a share of the business of the *Durande*, was not sorry to find that the *Douvres* rock had disposed of the new invention. The whispering became louder. The discussion grew noisy, though the hubbub was evidently a little restrained; and now and then there was a simultaneous lowering of voices out of respect to Lethierry's death like silence.

The result of the colloquy, so obstinately maintained on all sides, was as follows:

The engines were the vital part of the vessel. To rescue the *Durande* was impossible; but the machinery might still be saved. These engines were unique. To construct others similar, the money was wanting; but to find the artificer would have been still more difficult. It was remembered that the constructor of the machinery was dead. It had cost forty thousand francs. No one would risk again such a sum upon such a chance, particularly as it was now discovered that steam-boats could be lost like other vessels. The accident of the *Durande* destroyed the prestige of all her previous success. Still, it was deplorable to think that at that very moment this valuable mechanism was still entire and in good condition, and that in five or six days it would probably go to pieces, like the vessel herself. As long as this existed, it might almost be said that there was no shipwreck. The loss of the engines was alone irreparable. To save the machinery would be almost to repair the disaster.

Save the machinery! It was easy to talk of it, but who would undertake to do it? Was it possible, even? To scheme and to execute are two different things; as different as to dream and to do. Now if ever a dream had appeared wild and impracticable, it was that of saving the engines then imbedded between the *Douvres*. The idea of sending a ship and a crew to work upon those rocks was absurd. It could not be thought of. It was the season of heavy seas.

In the first gale the chains of the anchors would be worn away and snapped upon the submarine peaks, and the vessel must be shattered on the rocks. That would be to send a second shipwreck to the relief of the first. On the miserable narrow height where the legend of the place described the shipwrecked sailor as having perished of hunger, there was scarcely room for one person. To save the engines, therefore, it would be necessary for a man to go to the *Douvres*, to be alone in that sea, alone in that desert, alone at five leagues from the coast, alone in that region of terrors, alone for entire weeks, alone in the presence of dangers foreseen and unforeseen—without supplies in the face of hunger and nakedness, without succour in the time of distress, without token of human life around him save the bleached bones of the miserable being who had perished there in his misery, without companionship save that of death. And besides, how was it possible to extricate the machinery? It would require not only a sailor, but an engineer; and for what trials must he not prepare? The man who would attempt such a task must be more than a hero. He must be a madman; for in certain enterprises, in which superhuman power appears necessary, there is a sort of madness which is more potent than courage. And after all, would it not be folly to immolate one's self for a mass of rusted iron? No; it was certain that nobody would undertake to go to the *Douvres* on such an errand. The engine must be abandoned like the rest. The engineer for such a task would assuredly not be forthcoming. Where, indeed, should they look for such a man?

All this, or similar observations, formed the substance of the confused conversations of the crowd.

The captain of the "Shealtiel," who had been a pilot, summed up the views of all by exclaiming aloud,

"No; it is all over. The man does not exist who could go there and rescue the machinery of the *Durande*."

"If I don't go," said Imbrancam, "it is because nobody could do it."

The captain of the "Shealtiel" shook his left hand in the air with that sudden movement which expresses a conviction that a thing is impossible.

"If he existed—" continued the captain.

Déruchette turned her head impulsively, and interrupted.

"I would marry him," she said, innocently.

There was a pause.

A man made his way out of the crowd, and standing before her, pale and anxious, said,

"You would marry him, Miss Déruchette?"

It was Gilliatt.

All eyes were turned towards him. Mess Lethierry had just before stood upright, and gazed about him. His eyes glittered with a strange light.

He took off his sailor's cap and threw it on the ground; then looked solemnly before him,

and without seeing any of the persons present, said,

"Déruchette should be his. I pledge myself to it in God's name."

## II.

### MUCH ASTONISHMENT ON THE WESTERN COAST.

THE full moon rose at ten o'clock on the following night; but, however fine the night, however favourable the wind and sea, no fisherman thought of going out that evening either from Hogue la Perre, or Bourdeaux harbour, or Houmet Benet, or Platon, or Port Grat, or Vazon Bay, or Perrelle Bay, or Pezeries, or the Tielles or Saints' Bay, or Little Bo, or any other port or little harbour in Guernsey; and the reason was very simple. A cock had been heard to crow at noonday.

When the cock is heard to crow at an extraordinary hour, fishing is suspended.

At dusk on that evening, however, a fisherman returning to Omptolle met with a remarkable adventure. On the height above Houmet Paradis, beyond the Two Brayes and the two Grunes, stands to the left the beacon of the Plattes Tougères, representing a tub reversed; and to the right, the beacon of St. Sampson, representing the face of a man. Between these two, the fisherman thought that he perceived for the first time a third beacon. What could be the meaning of this beacon? When had it been erected on that point? What shoal did it indicate? The beacon responded immediately to these interrogations. It moved. It was a mast. The astonishment of the fisherman did not diminish. A beacon would have been remarkable; a mast was still more so: it could not be a fishing-boat. When everybody else was returning, some boat was going out. Who could it be? and what was he about?

Ten minutes later, the vessel, moving slowly, came within a short distance of the Omptolle fisherman. He did not recognise it. He heard the sound of rowing: there were evidently only two oars. There was probably, then, only one man aboard. The wind was northerly. The man, therefore, was evidently paddling along in order to take the wind off Point Fontenelle. There he would probably take to his sails. He intended then to double the Aucresse and Mount Crevel. What could that mean?

The vessel passed, the fisherman returned home. On that same night, at different hours, and at different points, various persons scattered and isolated on the western coast of Guernsey observed certain facts.

As the Omptolle fisherman was mooring his bark, a carter of seaweed about half a mile off, whipping his horses along the lonely road from the Clôtures, near the Druid stones, and in the neighbourhood of the Martello Towers 6 and 7, saw far off at sea, in a part little frequented, because it requires much knowledge of the waters,

and in the direction of North Rock and the Jablonneuse, a sail being hoisted. He paid little attention to the circumstance, not being a seaman, but a carter of seaweed.

Half an hour had perhaps elapsed since the carter had perceived this vessel, when a plasterer returning from his work in the town, and passing round Pelée Pool, found himself suddenly opposite a vessel sailing boldly among the rocks of the Quenon, the Rousse de Mer, and the Gripe de Rousse. The night was dark, but the sky was light over the sea, an effect common enough; and he could distinguish a great distance in every direction. There was no sail visible except this vessel.

A little lower, a gatherer of cray-fish, preparing his fish-wells on the beach which separates Port Soif from the Point Enfer, was puzzled to make out the movements of a vessel between the Boue Cornicille and the Moubrette. The man must have been a good pilot, and in great haste to reach some destination to risk his boat there.

Just as eight o'clock was striking at the Catel, the tavern-keeper at Cobo Bay observed with astonishment a sail out beyond the Boue du Jardin and the Grunettes, and very near the Susanne and the Western Grunes.

Not far from Cobo Bay, upon the solitary point of the Houmet of Vazon Bay, two lovers were lingering, hesitating before they parted for the night. The young woman addressed the young man with the words, "I am not going because I don't care to stay with you: I've a great deal to do." Their farewell kiss was interrupted by a good-sized sailing-boat which passed very near them, making for the direction of the Messellettes.

Monsieur le Peyre des Norgiots, an inhabitant of Cotillon Pipet, was engaged about nine o'clock in the evening in examining a hole made by some trespassers in the hedge of his property called La Jennerotte, and his "*friquet* planted with trees." Even while ascertaining the amount of the damage, he could not help observing a fishing-boat audaciously making its way round the Crocq Point at that hour of night.

On the morrow of a tempest, when there is always some agitation upon the sea, that route was hardly safe. It was rash to choose it, at least, unless the steersman knew all the channels by heart.

At half past nine o'clock, at L'Equerrier, a trawler carrying home his net stopped for a time to observe between Colombelle and the Souffleresse something which looked like a boat. The boat was in a dangerous position. Sudden gusts of wind of a very dangerous kind are very common in that spot. The *Souffleresse*, or Blower, derives its name from the sudden gusts of wind which it seems to direct upon the vessels which by rare chance find their way thither.

At the moment when the moon was rising, the tide being high and the sea being quiet, in the little strait of Li-Hou, the solitary keeper of the island of Li-Hou was considerably startled. A long black object slowly passed between the



moon and him. This dark form, high and narrow, resembled a winding-sheet spread out and moving. It glided along the line of the top of the wall formed by the ridges of rock. The keeper of Li-Hou fancied that he had beheld the Black Lady.

The White Lady inhabits the *Tau de Pez d'Amont*; the Gray Lady, the *Tau de Pez d'Aval*; the Red Lady, the *Silleuse*, to the north of the *Marquis Bank*; and the Black Lady, the *Grand Etacré*, to the west of *Li-Houmet*. At night, when the moon shines, these ladies stalk abroad, and sometimes meet.

That dark form might undoubtedly be a sail. The long groups of rocks on which she appeared to be walking might in fact be concealing the hull of a bark navigating behind them, and allowing only her sail to be seen. But the keeper asked himself, what bark would dare, at that hour, to venture herself between *Li-Hou* and the *Pécheresses*, and the *Angullières* and *Lérée Point*? And what object could she have? It seemed to him much more probable that it was the Black Lady.

As the moon was passing the clock-tower of *St. Peter in the Wood*, the sergeant at *Castle Rocquaine*, while in the act of raising the draw-bridge of the castle, distinguished at the end of the bay beyond the *Haute Canée*, but nearer than the *Sambule*, a sailing vessel which seemed to be steadily dropping down from north to south.

On the southern coast of *Guernsey*, behind *Pleinmont*, in the curve of a bay composed entirely of precipices and rocky walls rising peak-shaped from the sea, there is a singular landing-place, to which a French gentleman, a resident of the island since 1855, has given the name of "The Port on the Fourth Floor," a name now generally adopted. This port, or landing-place, which was then called the *Moie*, is a rocky plateau half formed by nature, half by art, raised about forty feet above the level of the waves, and communicating with the water by two large beams laid parallel in the form of an inclined plane. The fishing vessels are hoisted up there by chains and pulleys from the sea, and are let down again in the same way along these beams, which are like two rails. For the fishermen there is a ladder. The port was, at the time of our story, much frequented by the smugglers. Being difficult of access, it was well suited to their purposes.

Towards eleven o'clock, some smugglers—perhaps the same upon whose aid *Clubin* had counted—stood with their bales of goods on the summit of this platform of the *Moie*. A smuggler is necessarily a man on the look-out—it is part of his business to watch. They were astonished to perceive a sail suddenly make its appearance beyond the dusky outline of *Cape Pleinmont*. It was moonlight. The smugglers observed the sail narrowly, suspecting that it might be some coast-guard cutter about to lie in ambush behind the *Great Hanways*. But the sail left the *Hanways* behind, passed to the

north-west of the *Boue Blondel*, and was lost in the pale mists of the horizon out at sea.

"Where the devil can that boat be sailing?" asked the smuggler.

That same evening, a little after sunset, some one had been heard knocking at the door of the old house of the *Bû de la Rue*. It was a boy wearing brown clothes and yellow stockings, a fact that indicated that he was a little parish clerk. An old fisherwoman prowling about the shore with a lantern in her hand had called to the boy, and this dialogue ensued between the fisherwoman and the little clerk before the entrance to the *Bû de la Rue*:

"What d'ye want, lad?"

"The man of this place."

"He's not there."

"Where is he?"

"I don't know."

"Will he be there to-morrow?"

"I don't know."

"Is he gone away?"

"I don't know."

"I've come, good woman, from the new rector of the parish, the Reverend *Ebenezer Caudray*, who desires to pay him a visit."

"I don't know where he is."

"The rector sent me to ask if the man who lives at the *Bû de la Rue* would be at home to-morrow morning."

"I don't know."

### III.

#### A QUOTATION FROM THE BIBLE.

During the twenty-four hours which followed, *Mess Lethierry* slept not, ate nothing, drank nothing. He kissed *Déruchette* on the forehead; asked after *Clubin*, of whom there was as yet no news; signed a declaration certified that he had no intention of preferring a charge against any one, and set *Tangrouille* at liberty.

All the morning of the next day he remained half supporting himself on the table of the office of the *Durande*, neither standing nor sitting; answering kindly when any one spoke to him. Curiosity being satisfied, the *Bravées* had become a solitude. There is a good deal of curiosity generally mingled with the haste of condolences. The door had closed again, and left the old man again alone with *Déruchette*. The strange light that had shone in *Lethierry's* eyes was extinguished. The mournful look which filled them after the first news of the disaster had returned.

*Déruchette*, anxious for his sake, had, on the advice of *Grace* and *Douce*, laid silently beside him a pair of stockings, which he had been knitting, sailor fashion, when the bad news had arrived.

He smiled bitterly, and said,

"They must think me foolish."

After a quarter of an hour's silence, he added,

"These things are well when you are happy."

Déruchette carried away the stockings, and took advantage of the opportunity to remove also the compass and the ship's papers which Lethierry had been brooding over too long.

In the afternoon, a little before tea-time, the door opened, and two strangers entered, attired in black. One was old, the other young.

The young one has, perhaps, already been observed in the course of this story.

The two men had each a grave air, but their gravity appeared different. The old man possessed what might be called state gravity; the gravity of the young man was in his nature. Habit engenders the one, thought the other.

They were, as their costume indicated, two clergymen, each belonging to the Established Church.

The first fact in the appearance of the younger man which might have first struck the observer was that his gravity, though conspicuous in the expression of his features, and evidently springing from the mind, was not indicated by his person. Gravity is not inconsistent with passion, which it exalts by purifying it; but the idea of gravity could with difficulty be associated with an exterior remarkable above all for personal beauty. Being in Holy Orders, he must have been at least five-and-twenty, but he seemed scarcely more than eighteen. He possessed those gifts at once in harmony with, and in opposition to each other. A soul which seemed created for exalted passion, and a body created for love. He was fair, rosy-fresh, slim, and elegant in his severe attire, with the cheeks of a young girl, and delicate hands. His movements were natural and lively, though subdued. Everything about him was pleasing, elegant, almost voluptuous. The beauty of his expression served to correct this excess of personal attraction. His open smile, which showed his teeth, regular and white as those of a child, had something in it pensive, even devotional. He had the gracefulness of a page, mingled with the dignity of a bishop.

His fair hair, so fair and golden as to be almost effeminate, clustered over his white forehead, which was high and well-formed. A slight double line between the eyebrows awakened associations with studious thought.

Those who saw him felt themselves in the presence of one of those natures, benevolent, innocent, and pure, whose progress is in inverse sense with that of vulgar minds; natures whom illusion renders wise, and whom experience makes enthusiasts.

His older companion was no other than Doctor Jaquemin Hérode. Doctor Jaquemin Hérode belonged to the High-Church; a party whose system is a sort of popery without a pope. The Church of England was at that epoch labouring with the tendencies which have since become strengthened and condensed in the form of Puseyism. Doctor Jaquemin Hérode belonged to that shade of Anglicanism which is almost a variety of the Church of Rome. He

was haughty, precise, stiff, and commanding. His inner sight scarcely penetrated outwardly. He possessed the spirit in the place of the letter. His manner was arrogant; his presence imposing. He had less the appearance of a "Reverend" than of a *Monsignore*. His frock-coat was cut somewhat in the fashion of a cassock. His true centre would have been Rome. He was a born Prelate of the Ante-chamber. He seemed to have been created expressly to fill a part in the Papal Court, to walk behind the Pontifical litter, with all the Court of Rome in *abito pazonazzo*. The accident of his English birth and his theological education, directed more towards the Old than the New Testament, had deprived him of that destiny. All his splendours were comprised in his preferments as Rector of St. Peter's Port, Dean of the Island of Guernsey, and Surrogate of the Bishop of Winchester. These were, undoubtedly, not without their glories. These glories did not prevent M. Jaquemin Hérode being, on the whole, a worthy man.

As a theologian, he was esteemed by those who were able to judge of such matters; he was almost an authority in the Court of Arches—that Sorbonne of England.

He had the true air of erudition; a learned contraction of the eyes; bristling nostrils; teeth which showed themselves at all times; a thin upper lip and a thick lower one. He was the possessor of several learned degrees, a valuable prebend, titled friends, the confidence of the bishop, and a Bible, which he carried always in his pocket.

Mess Lethierry was so completely absorbed that the entrance of the two priests produced no effect upon him, save a slight movement of the eyebrows.

M. Jaquemin Hérode advanced, bowed, alluded in a few sober and dignified words to his recent promotion, and mentioned that he came according to custom to introduce among the inhabitants, and to Mess Lethierry in particular, his successor in the parish, the new Rector of St. Sampson, the Rev. Ebenezer Caudray, henceforth the pastor of Mess Lethierry.

Déruchette rose.

The young clergyman, who was the Rev. Ebenezer, saluted her.

Mess Lethierry regarded Monsieur Ebenezer Caudray, and muttered, "A bad sailor."

Grace placed chairs. The two visitors seated themselves near the table.

Doctor Hérode commenced a discourse. It had reached his ears that a serious misfortune had befallen his host. The Durande had been lost. He came as Lethierry's pastor to offer condolence and advice. This shipwreck was unfortunate, and yet not without compensations. Let us examine our own hearts. Are we not puffed up with prosperity? The waters of felicity are dangerous. Troubles must be submitted to cheerfully. The ways of Providence are mysterious. Mess Lethierry was ruined, perhaps. But riches were a danger. You may have false friends; poverty will disperse them,



and leave you alone. The Durande was reported to have brought a revenue of one thousand pounds sterling per annum. It was more than enough for the wise. Let us fly from temptations; put not our faith in gold; bow the head to losses and neglect. Isolation is full of good fruits. It was in solitude that Aiah discovered the warm springs while leading the asses of his father Lebeon. Let us not rebel against the inscrutable decrees of Providence. The holy man Job, after his misery, had put faith in riches. Who can say that the loss of the Durande may not have its advantages even of a temporal kind. He, for instance, Doctor Jaquemin Hérode, had invested some money in an excellent enterprise, now in progress at Sheffield. If Mess Lethierry, with the wealth which might still remain to him, should choose to embark in the same affair, he might transfer his capital to that town. It was an extensive manufactory of arms for the supply of the Czar, now engaged in repressing insurrection in Poland. There was a good prospect of obtaining three hundred per cent. profit.

The word Czar appeared to awaken Lethierry. He interrupted Dr. Hérode.

"I want nothing to do with the Czar."

The Reverend Hérode replied,

"Mess Lethierry, princes are recognised by God. It is written, 'Render unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's.' The Czar is Cæsar."

Lethierry partly relapsed into his dream and muttered,

"Cæsar? who is Cæsar? I don't know."

The Rev. Jaquemin Hérode continued his exhortations. He did not press the question of Sheffield.

To condemn a Cæsar was republicanism. He could understand a man being a republican. In that case he could turn his thoughts towards a republic. Mess Lethierry might repair his fortune in the United States even better than in England. If he desired to invest what remained to him at great profit, he had only to take shares in the great company for developing the resources of Texas, which employed more than twenty thousand negroes.

"I want nothing to do with slavery," said Lethierry.

"Slavery," replied the Reverend Hérode, "is an institution recognised by Scripture. It is written, 'If the master has beaten his slave, nothing shall be done to him, for he is his money.'"

Grace and Douce at the door of the room listened in a sort of ecstasy to the words of the Reverend Doctor.

The Doctor continued. He was, all things considered, as we have said, a worthy man; and whatever his differences, personal or connected with caste, with Mess Lethierry, he had come very sincerely to offer him that spiritual and even temporal aid which he, Doctor Jaquemin Hérode, dispensed.

If Mess Lethierry's fortune had been dimin-

ished to that point that he was unable to take a beneficial part in any speculation, Russian or American, why should he not obtain some government appointment suited to him? There were many very respectable places open to him, and the reverend gentleman was ready to recommend him. The office of Deputy Vicomte was just vacant. Mess Lethierry was popular and respected, and the reverend Jaquemin Hérode, Dean of Guernsey and Surrogate of the Bishop, would make an effort to obtain for Mess Lethierry this post. The Deputy Vicomte is an important officer. He is present as the representative of His Majesty at the holding of the Sessions, at the debates of the *Cohue*, and at executions of justice.

Lethierry fixed his eye upon Doctor Hérode. "I don't like hanging," he said.

Doctor Hérode, who, up to this point, had pronounced his words with the same intonation, had now a fit of severity; his tone became slightly changed.

"Mess Lethierry, the pain of death is of divine ordination. God has placed the sword in the hands of governors. It is written, 'An eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth.'"

The Reverend Ebenezer imperceptibly drew his chair nearer to the Reverend Jaquemin, and said, so as to be heard only by him,

"What this man says is dictated to him."

"By whom? By what?" demanded the Reverend Jaquemin Hérode, in the same tone.

The young man replied in a whisper, "By his conscience."

The Reverend Hérode felt in his pocket, drew out a thick little bound volume with clasps, and said aloud,

"Conscience is here."

The book was a Bible.

The Doctor Hérode's tone became softer. "His wish was to render a service to Mess Lethierry, whom he respected much. As his pastor, it was his right and duty to offer counsel. Mess Lethierry, however, was free."

Mess Lethierry, plunged once more in his overwhelming absorption, no longer listened. Déruchette, seated near him, and thoughtful, also did not raise her eyes, and by her silent presence somewhat increased the embarrassment of a conversation not very animated. A witness who says nothing is a species of indefinite weight, Doctor Hérode, however, did not appear to feel it.

Lethierry no longer replying, Doctor Hérode expatiated freely. "Counsel is from man; inspiration is from God. In the counsels of the priests there is inspiration. It is good to accept, dangerous to refuse them. Sochoh was seized by eleven devils for disdaining the exhortations of Nathaniel. Tiburius was struck with a leprosy for having driven from his house the Apostle Andrew. Barjesus, a magician though he was, was punished with blindness for having mocked at the words of St. Paul. Elxar and his sisters, Martha and Martena, are in eternal torments for despising the warnings of

Valencianus, who proved to them clearly that their Jesus Christ, thirty-eight leagues in height, was a demon. Aholibamah, who is also called Judith, obeyed the commands of Reuben, and Peniel listened to the counsels from on high, as their names indeed indicate. Reuben signifies son of the vision; and Peniel, the face of God."

Mess Lethierry struck the table with his fist.

"Parbleu!" he cried; "it was my fault."

"What do you mean?" asked M. Jaquemin Hérode.

"I say that it is my fault."

"Your fault? Why?"

"Because I allowed the Durande to return on Fridays."

M. Jaquemin Hérode whispered in the ear of M. Ebenezer Caudray,

"This man is superstitious."

He resumed, raising his voice, and in a didactic tone:

"Mess Lethierry, it is puerile to believe in Fridays. You ought not to put faith in fables. Friday is a day just like any other. It is very often a propitious day. Melendez founded the city of Saint Augustin on a Friday; it was on a Friday that Henry the Seventh gave his commission to John Cabot; the Pilgrims of the 'Mayflower' landed at Province Town on a Friday. Washington was born on Friday, the 22d of February, 1732; Christopher Columbus discovered America on Friday, the 12th of October, 1492."

Having delivered himself of these remarks, he rose.

Caudray, whom he had brought with him, rose also.

Grace and Douce, perceiving that the two clergymen were about to take their leave, opened the folding-doors.

Mess Lethierry saw nothing—heard nothing.

M. Jaquemin Hérode said apart to M. Caudray,

"He does not even salute us. This is not sorrow; it is vacancy. He must have lost his reason."

He took his little Bible, however, from the table, and held it between his hands outstretched, as one holds a bird in fear that it may fly away. This attitude awakened among the persons present a certain amount of attention. Grace and Douce leaned forward eagerly.

His voice assumed all the solemnity of which it was capable.

"Mess Lethierry," he began, "let us not part without reading a page of the Holy Book. It is from books that wise men derive consolation in the troubles of life. The profane have their oracles; but believers have their ready resource in the Bible. The first book which comes to hand, opened by chance, may afford counsel; but the Bible, opened at any page, yields a revelation. It is, above all, a boon to the afflicted. Yes, Holy Scripture is an unfailing balm for their wounds. In the presence of affliction, it is good to consult its sacred pages—to open even without choosing the place, and to read with faith the passage which we find. What man does not choose is chosen by God. He knoweth best what suiteth us. His finger pointeth invisibly to that which we read. Whatever be the page, it will infallibly enlighten. Let us seek, then, no other light, but hold fast to his. It is the word from on high. In the text which is evoked with confidence and reverence, often do we find a mysterious significance in our present troubles. Let us hearken, then, and obey. Mess Lethierry, you are in affliction, but I hold here the book of consolation. You are sick at heart, but I have here the book of spiritual health."

The Reverend Jaquemin Hérode touched the spring of the clasp, and let his finger slip between the leaves. Then he placed his hand a moment upon the open volume, collected his thoughts, and, raising his eyes impressively, began to read in a loud voice.

The passage which he had lighted on was as follows:

"And Isaac went out to meditate in the field at the eventide, and he lifted up his eyes and saw and beheld the camels were coming.

"And Rebekah lifted up her eyes, and when she saw Isaac she lighted off the camel.

"For she had said unto the servant, What man is this that walketh in the field to meet us?"

"And Isaac brought her into his mother Sarah's tent, and took Rebekah, and she became his wife, and he loved her; and Isaac was comforted after his mother's death."

Caudray and Déruvette glanced at each other.



## SECOND PART.—THE TOILERS OF THE SEA.

BOOK I.  
MALICIOUS GILLIATT.

## I.

THE PLACE WHICH IS EASY TO REACH, BUT  
DIFFICULT TO LEAVE AGAIN.

THE bark which had been observed at so many points on the coast of Guernsey on the previous evening was, as the reader has guessed, the old Dutch barge or sloop. Gilliatt had chosen the channel along the coast among the rocks. It was the most dangerous way, but it was the most direct. To take the shortest route was his only thought. Shipwrecks will not wait; the sea is a pressing creditor; an hour's delay may be irreparable. His anxiety was to arrive quickly to the rescue of the machinery in danger.

One of his objects in leaving Guernsey was to avoid arousing attention. He set out like one escaping from justice, and seemed anxious to hide from human eyes. He shunned the eastern coast, as if he did not care to pass in sight of St. Sampson and St. Peter's Port, and glided silently along the opposite coast, which is comparatively uninhabited. Among the breakers, it was necessary to ply the oars; but Gilliatt managed them on scientific principles; taking the water quietly, and dropping it with exact regularity, he was able to move in the darkness with as little noise and as rapidly as possible. So stealthy were his movements, that he might have seemed to be bent upon some evil errand.

In truth, though embarking desperately in an enterprise which might well be called impossible, and risking his life with nearly every chance against him, he feared nothing but the possibility of some one rival in the work which he had set before him.

As the day began to break, those unknown eyes which look down upon the world from boundless space might have beheld, at one of the most dangerous and solitary spots at sea, two objects, the distance between which was gradually decreasing, as the one was approaching the other. One, which was almost imperceptible in the wide movement of the waters, was a sailing boat. In this was a man. It was the sloop. The other, black, motionless, colossal, rose above the waves, a singular form. Two tall pillars issuing from the sea bore aloft a sort of cross-beam which was like a bridge

between them. This bridge, so singular in shape that it was impossible to imagine what it was from a distance, touched each of the two pillars. It resembled a vast portal. Of what use could such an erection be in that open plain, the sea, which stretched around it far and wide? It might have been imagined to be a Titanic Cromlech, planted there in mid-ocean by an imperious whim, and built up by hands accustomed to proportion their labours to the abyss. Its wild outline stood well-defined against the clear sky.

The morning light was growing stronger in the east; the whiteness in the horizon deepened the shadow on the sea. In the opposite sky the moon was sinking.

The two perpendicular forms were the Douvres. The huge mass held fast between them, like an architrave between two pillars, was the wreck of the Durande.

The rock, thus holding fast and exhibiting its prey, was terrible to behold. Inanimate things seem sometimes endowed with a dark and hostile spirit towards man. There was a menace in the attitude of the rocks. They seemed to be biding their time.

Nothing could be more suggestive of haughtiness and arrogance than their whole appearance: the conquered vessel; the triumphant abyss. The two rocks, still streaming with the tempest of the day before, seemed like two wrestlers sweating from a recent struggle. The wind had sunk; the sea rippled gently; here and there the presence of breakers might be detected in the graceful streaks of foam upon the surface of the waters. A sound came from the sea like the murmuring of bees. All around was level except the Douvres, rising straight, like two black columns. Up to a certain height they were completely bearded with seaweed; above this their steep haunches glittered at points like polished armour. They seemed ready to commence the strife again. The beholder felt that they were rooted deep in mountains whose summits were beneath the sea. Their aspect was full of a sort of tragic power.

Ordinarily the sea conceals her crimes. She delights in privacy. Her unfathomable deeps keep silence. She wraps herself in a mystery which rarely consents to give up its secrets. We know her savage nature, but who can tell

the extent of her dark deeds? She is at once open and secret; she hides away carefully, and cares not to divulge her actions; wrecks a vessel, and, covering it with the waves, engulfs it deep, as if conscious of her guilt. Among her crimes is hypocrisy. She slays and steals, conceals her booty, puts on an air of unconsciousness, and smiles.

Here, however, was nothing of the kind. The Douvres, lifting above the level of the waters the shattered hull of the *Durande*, had an air of triumph. The imagination might have pictured them as two monstrous arms, reaching upward from the gulf, and exhibiting to the tempest the lifeless body of the ship. Their aspect was like that of an assassin boasting of his evil deeds.

The solemnity of the hour contributed something to the impression of the scene. There is a mysterious grandeur in the dawn, as of the border-land between the region of consciousness and the world of our dreams. There is something spectral in that confused transition time. The immense form of the two Douvres, like a capital letter H, the *Durande* forming its cross-stroke, appeared against the horizon in all their twilight majesty.

Gilliatt was attired in his seaman's clothing: a Guernsey shirt, woollen stockings, thick shoes, a homespun jacket, trousers of thick stuff, with pockets, and a cap upon his head, of red worsted, of a kind then much in use among sailors, and known in the last century as a *galérienne*.

He recognised the rocks, and steered towards them.

The situation of the *Durande* was exactly the contrary of that of a vessel gone to the bottom: it was a vessel suspended in the air.

No problem more strange was ever presented to a salvor.

It was broad daylight when Gilliatt arrived in the waters about the rock.

As we have said, there was but little sea. The slight agitation of the water was due almost entirely to its confinement among the rocks. Every passage, small or large, is subject to this chopping movement. The inside of a channel is always more or less white with foam. Gilliatt did not approach the Douvres without caution.

He cast the sounding-lead several times.

He had a cargo to disembark.

Accustomed to long absences, he had at home a number of necessaries always ready. He had brought a sack of biscuit, another of rye-meal, a basket of salt fish and smoked beef, a large can of fresh water; a Norwegian chest painted with flowers, containing several coarse woollen shirts, his tarpaulin and his water-proof overalls, and a sheepskin which he was accustomed to throw at night over his clothes. On leaving the *Bû de la Rue* he had put all these things hastily into the barge, with the addition of a large loaf. In his hurry he had brought no other tools but his huge forge-hammer, his chopper and hatchet, and a knotted rope. Furnished with a grap-

pling-iron and with a ladder of that sort, the steepest rocks become accessible, and a good sailor will find it possible to scale the rudest escarpment. In the island of Sark the visitor may see what the fishermen of the Havre Gosselin can accomplish with a knotted cord.

His nets and lines, and all his fishing apparatus, were in the barge. He had placed them there mechanically and by habit; for he intended, if his enterprise continued, to sojourn for some time in an archipelago of rocks and breakers, where fishing-nets and tackle are of little use.

At the moment when Gilliatt was skirting the great rock, the sea was retiring, a circumstance favourable to his purpose. The departing tide laid bare, at the foot of the smaller Douvre, one or two table-rocks, horizontal or only slightly inclined, and bearing a fanciful resemblance to boards supported by crows. These table-rocks, sometimes narrow, sometimes broad, standing at unequal distances along the side of the great perpendicular column, were continued in the form of a thin cornice up to a spot just beneath the *Durande*, the hull of which stood swelling out between the two rocks. The wreck was held fast there as in a vice.

This series of platforms was convenient for approaching and surveying the position. It was convenient for disembarking the contents of the barge provisionally; but it was necessary to hasten, for it was only above water for a few hours. With the rising tide the table-rocks would be again beneath the foam.

It was before these table-rocks, some level, some slanting, that Gilliatt pushed in and brought the barge to a stand. A thick mass of wet and slippery sea-wrack covered them, rendered more slippery here and there by their inclined surfaces.

Gilliatt pulled off his shoes and sprang naked-footed on to the slimy weeds, and made fast the barge to a point of rock.

Then he advanced as far as he could along the granite cornice, reached the rock immediately beneath the wreck, looked up and examined it.

The *Durande* had been caught suspended, and, as it were, fitted in between the two rocks, at about twenty feet above the water. It must have been a heavy sea which had cast her there.

Such effects from furious seas have nothing surprising for those who are familiar with the ocean. To cite one example only: On January 25th, 1840, in the Gulf of Stora, a tempest struck with its expiring force a brig, and casting it almost intact completely over the broken wreck of the corvette "*La Marne*," fixed it immovable, bowsprit first, in a gap between the cliffs.

The Douvres, however, held only a part of the *Durande*.

The vessel, snatched from the waves, had been, as it were, uprooted from the waters by the hurricane. A whirlwind had wrenched it against the counteracting force of the rolling waves, and the vessel, thus caught in contrary



directions by the two claws of the tempest, had snapped like a lath. The after part, with the engine and the paddles, lifted out of the foam, and driven by all the fury of the cyclone into the defile of the Douvres, had plunged in up to her midship beam, and remained there. The blow had been well directed. To drive it in this fashion between the two rocks, the storm had struck it as with an enormous hammer. The fore-castle, carried away and rolled down by the sea, had gone to fragments among the breakers.

The hold, broken in, had scattered out the bodies of the drowned cattle upon the sea.

A large portion of the forward bulwarks still hung to the riders of the larboard paddle-boxes, and by some shattered braces easy to strike off with the blow of a hatchet.

Here and there, among beams, planks, rags of canvas, pieces of chains and other remains of wreck were seen lying about among the rugged fragments of shattered rock.

Gilliatt surveyed the *Durande* attentively. The keel formed a roofing over his head.

A serene sky stretched far and wide over the waters, scarcely wrinkled with a passing breath. The sun rose gloriously in the midst of the vast azure circle.

From time to time a drop of water was detached from the wreck and fell into the sea.

## II.

### A CATALOGUE OF DISASTERS.

THE Douvres differed in shape as well as in height.

Upon the Little Douvre, which was curved and pointed, long veins of reddish-coloured rock, of a comparatively soft kind, could be seen branching out and dividing the interior of the granite. At the edges of these red dikes were fractures favourable to climbing. One of these fractures, situated a little above the wreck, had been so laboriously worn and scooped out by the splashing of the waves, that it had become a sort of niche, in which it would have been quite possible to place a statue. The granite of the Little Douvre was rounded at the surface, and, to the feel at least, soft like touchstone; but this feeling detracted nothing from its durability. The Little Douvre terminated in a point like a horn. The Great Douvre, polished, smooth, glossy, perpendicular, and looking as if cut out by the builder's square, was in one piece, and seemed made of black ivory. Not a hole, not a break in its smooth surface. The escarpment looked inhospitable. A convict could not have used it for escape, nor a bird for a place for its nest. On its summit there was a horizontal surface as upon "The Man Rock;" but the summit of the Great Douvre was inaccessible.

It was possible to scale the Little Douvre, but not to remain on the summit; it would have

been possible to rest on the summit of the Great Douvre, but impossible to ascend it.

Gilliatt, having rapidly surveyed the situation of affairs, returned to the barge, landed its contents upon the largest of the horizontal cornice rocks, made of the whole compact mass a sort of bale, which he rolled up in tarpaulin, fitted a sling rope to it with a hoisting block, pushed the package into a corner of the rocks where the waves could not reach it, and then clatching the Little Douvre with his hands, and holding on with his naked feet, he clambered from projection to projection, and from niche to niche, until he found himself level with the wrecked vessel high up in the air.

Having reached the height of the paddles, he sprang upon the poop.

The interior of the wreck presented a mournful aspect.

Traces of a great struggle were everywhere visible. There were plainly to be seen the frightful ravages of the sea and wind. The action of the tempest is like the violence of a band of pirates. Nothing is more like the victim of a criminal outrage than a wrecked ship violated and stripped by those terrible accomplices, the storm-cloud, the thunder, the rain, the squall, the waves, and the breakers.

Standing upon the dismantled deck, it was natural to dream of the presence of something like a furious stamping of the spirits of the storm. Everywhere around were the marks of their rage. The strange contortions of certain portions of the iron-work bore testimony to the terrific force of the winds. The between-decks were like the cell of a lunatic, in which everything has been broken.

No wild beasts can compare with the sea for mangling its prey. The waves are full of talons. The north wind bites, the billows devour, the waves are like hungry jaws. The ocean strikes like a lion with its heavy paw, seizing and dismembering at the same moment.

The ruin conspicuous in the *Durande* presents the peculiarity of being detailed and minute. It was a sort of horrible stripping and plucking. Much of it seemed done with design. The beholder was tempted to exclaim, "What wanton mischief!" The ripping of the planking was edged here and there artistically. This peculiarity is common with the ravages of the cyclone. To chip and tear away, such is the caprice of the great devastator. Its ways are like those of the professional torturer. The disasters which it causes wear a look of ingenious punishments. One might fancy it actuated by the worst passions of man. It refines in cruelty like a savage. While it is exterminating it dissects bone by bone. It torments its victim, avenges itself, and takes delight in its work. It even appears to descend to petty acts of malice.

Cyclones are rare in our latitudes, and are, for that reason, the more dangerous, being generally unexpected. A rock in the path of a heavy wind may become the pivot of a storm. It is probable that the squall had thus rotated

upon the point of the Douvres, and had turned suddenly into a waterspout on meeting the shock of the rocks, a fact which explained the casting of the vessel so high among them. When the cyclone blows, a vessel is of no more weight in the wind than a stone in a sling.

The damage received by the *Durande* was like the wound of a man cut in twain. It was a divided trunk from which issued a mass of debris like the entrails of a body. Various kinds of cordage hung floating and trembling, chains swung clattering; the fibres and nerves of the vessel were there naked and exposed. What was not smashed was disjointed.

Fragments of the sheathing resembled curry-combs bristling with nails; everything bore the appearance of ruin; a handspike had become nothing but a piece of iron; a sounding-lead, nothing but a lump of metal; a dead-eye had become a mere piece of wood; a halliard, an end of rope; a strand of cord, a tangled skein; a bolt-rope, a thread in the hem of a sail. Everything around was the lamentable work of demolition. Nothing remained that was not unhooked, unnailed, cracked, wasted, warped, pierced with holes, destroyed; nothing hung together in the dreadful mass, but all was torn, dislocated, broken. There was that air of drift which characterizes the scene of all struggles—from the mêlées of men, which are called battles, to the mêlées of the elements, to which we give the name of chaos. Everything was sinking and dropping away; a rolling mass of planks, panelling, iron-work, cables, and beams had been arrested just at the great fracture of the hull, whence the least additional shock must have precipitated them into the sea. What remained of her powerful frame, once so triumphant, was cracked here and there, showing through large apertures the dismal gloom within.

The foam from below spat its flakes contemptuously upon this broken and forlorn outcast of the sea.

### III.

#### SOUND, BUT NOT SAFE.

GILLIATT did not expect to find only a portion of the ship existing. Nothing in the description, in other respects so precise, of the captain of the "*Shealtiel*" had led him to anticipate this division of the vessel in the centre. It was probable that the "diabolical crash" heard by the captain of the "*Shealtiel*" marked the moment when this destruction had taken place under the blows of a tremendous sea. The captain had, doubtless, worn ship just before this last heavy squall; and what he had taken for a great sea was probably a waterspout. Later, when he drew nearer to observe the wreck, he had only been able to see the stern of the vessel—the remainder, that is to say, the large opening where the fore part had given way, having been concealed from him among the masses of rock.

With that exception, the information given by

the captain of the "*Shealtiel*" was strictly correct. The hull was useless, but the engine remained intact.

Such chances are common in the history of shipwreck. The logic of disaster at sea is beyond the grasp of human science.

The masts, having snapped short, had fallen over the side; the chimney was not even bent. The great iron plating which supported the machinery had kept it together, and in one piece. The planks of the paddle-boxes were disjointed, like the leaves of wooden sun-blinds, but through their apertures the paddles themselves could be seen in good condition. A few of their floats only were missing.

Besides the machinery, the great stern capstan had resisted the destruction. Its chain was there, and, thanks to its firm fixture in a frame of joists, might still be of service, unless the strain of the voyal should break away the planking. The flooring of the deck bent at almost every point, and was tottering throughout.

On the other hand, the trunk of the hull, fixed between the Douvres, held together, as we have already said, and it appeared strong.

There was something like derision in this preservation of the machinery; something which added to the irony of the misfortune. The sombre malice of the unseen powers of mischief displays itself sometimes in such bitter mockeries. The machinery was saved, but its preservation did not make it any the less lost. The ocean seemed to have kept it only to demolish it at leisure. It was like the playing of the cat with her prey.

Its fate was to suffer there and to be dismembered day by day. It was to be the plaything of the savage amusements of the sea. It was slowly to dwindle, and, as it were, to melt away. For what could be done? That this vast block of mechanism and gear, at once massive and delicate, condemned to fixity by its weight, delivered up in that solitude to the destructive elements, exposed in the gripe of the rock to the action of the wind and wave, could, under the frown of that implacable spot, escape from slow destruction, seemed a madness even to imagine.

The *Durande* was the captive of the Douvres.

How could she be extricated from that position?

How could she be delivered from her bondage?

The escape of a man is difficult; but what a problem was this—the escape of a vast and cumbrous machinery.

### IV.

#### A PRELIMINARY SURVEY.

GILLIATT was pressed on all sides by urgent demands upon his labours. The most pressing, however, was to find a safe mooring for the barge; then a shelter for himself.



The *Durande* having settled down more on the larboard than on the starboard side, the right paddle-box was higher than the left.

Gilliatt ascended the paddle-box on the right. From that position, although the gut of rocks stretching in broken angles behind the *Douvres* had several elbows, he was able to study the ground-plan of the group.

This survey was the preliminary step of his operations.

The *Douvres*, as we have already described them, were like two high gable ends, forming the narrow entrance to a straggling alley of small cliffs with perpendicular faces. It is not rare to find in primitive submarine formations these singular kinds of passages, which seem cut out with a hatchet.

This defile was extremely tortuous, and was never without water, even in the low tides. A current, much agitated, traversed it at all times from end to end. The sharpness of its turnings was favourable or unfavourable, according to the nature of the prevailing wind; sometimes it broke the swell and caused it to fall; sometimes it exasperated it. This latter effect was the most frequent. An obstacle arouses the anger of the sea, and pushes it to excesses. The foam is the exasperation of the waves.

The two chains of rocks, leaving between them this kind of street in the sea, formed stages at a lower level than the *Douvres*, gradually decreasing, until they sunk together at a certain distance beneath the waves.

The stormy winds in these narrow and tortuous passages between the rocks are subjected to a similar compression, and acquire the same malignant character. The tempest frets in its sudden imprisonment. Its bulk is still immense, but sharpened and contracted; and it strikes with the massiveness of a huge club and the keenness of an arrow. It pierces even while it strikes down. It is a hurricane contracted, like the draught through the crevice of a door.

There was another such gullet of less height than the gullet of the *Douvres*, but narrower still, and which formed the eastern entrance of the defile. It was evident that the double prolongation of the ridge of rocks continued the kind of street under the water as far as "The Man" rock, which stood like a square citadel at the extremity of the group.

At low water, indeed, which was the time at which Gilliatt was observing them, the two rows of sunken rock showed their tips, some high and dry, and all visible and preserving their parallel without interruption.

"The Man" formed the boundary, and buttressed on the eastern side the entire mass of the group, which was protected on the opposite side by the two *Douvres*.

The whole, from a bird's-eye view, appeared like a winding chaplet of rocks, having the *Douvres* at one extremity and "The Man" at the other.

The *Douvres*, taken together, were merely

two gigantic shafts of granite protruding vertically and almost touching each other, and forming the crest of one of the mountainous ranges lying beneath the ocean. Those immense ridges are not only found rising out of the unfathomable deep. The surf and the squall had broken it up and divided it like the teeth of a saw. Only the tip of the ridge was visible; this was the group of rocks. The remainder, which the waves concealed, must have been enormous. The passage in which the storm had planted the *Durande* was the way between these two colossal shafts.

This passage, zigzag in form as the forked lightning, was of about the same width in all parts. The ocean had so fashioned it. Its eternal commotion produces sometimes those singular regularities. There is a sort of geometry in the action of the sea.

From one extremity to the other of the defile, the two parallel granite walls confronted each other at a distance which the midship frame of the *Durande* measured exactly. Between the two *Douvres*, the widening of the Little *Douvre*, curved and turned back as it was, had formed a space for the paddles. In any other part they must have been shattered to fragments.

The high double façade of rock within the passage was hideous to the sight. When, in the exploration of the desert of water which we call the ocean, we come upon the unknown world of the sea, all is uncouth and shapeless. So much as Gilliatt could see of the defile from the height of the wreck was appalling. In the rocky gorges of the ocean we may often trace a strange permanent impersonation of shipwreck. The defile of the *Douvres* was one of these gorges, and its effect was exciting to the imagination. The oxydes of the rock showed on the escarpment here and there in red places, like marks of clotted blood; it resembled the splashes on the walls of an abattoir. Associations of the charnel-house haunted the place. The rough marine stones, diversely tinted—here by the decomposition of metallic amalgams mingling with the rock, there by the mould of dampness, manifested in places by purple scales, hideous green blotches, and ruddy splashes, awakened ideas of murder and extermination. It was like the unwashed walls of a chamber which had been the scene of an assassination; or it might have been imagined that men had been crushed to death there, leaving traces of their fate. The peaked rocks produced an indescribable impression of accumulated agonies. Certain spots appeared to be still dripping with the carnage; here the wall was wet, and it looked impossible to touch it without leaving the fingers bloody. The blight of massacre seemed everywhere. At the base of the double parallel escarpment, scattered along the water's edge, or just below the waves, or in the worn hollows of the rocks, were monstrous rounded masses of shingle, some scarlet, others black or purple, which bore a strange resemblance to internal organs of the body;

they might have been taken for human lungs, or heart, or liver, scattered and putrefying in that dismal place. Giants might have been disembowelled there. From top to bottom of the granite ran long red lines, which might have been taken for the oozeings from a funeral bier.

Such aspects are frequent in sea caverns.

## V.

### A WORD UPON THE SECRET CO-OPERATIONS OF THE ELEMENTS.

Those who, by the disastrous chances of sea voyages, happen to be condemned to a temporary habitation upon a rock in mid-ocean, find that the form of their inhospitable refuge is by no means a matter of indifference. There is the pyramidal-shaped rock, a single peak rising from the water; there is the circle rock somewhat resembling a round of great stones; and there is the corridor rock. The latter is the most alarming of all. It is not only the ceaseless agony of the waves between its walls or the tumult of the imprisoned sea; there are also certain obscure meteorological characteristics, which seem to appertain to this parallelism of two marine rocks. The two straight sides seem a veritable electric battery.

The first result of the peculiar position of these corridor rocks is an action upon the air and the water. The corridor rock acts upon the waves and the wind mechanically by its form; galvanically, by the different magnetic action rendered possible by its vertical height, its masses in juxtaposition and contrary to each other.

This form of rock attracts to itself all the forces scattered in the winds, and exercises over the tempest a singular power of concentration.

Hence there is in the neighbourhood of these breakers a certain accentuation of storms.

It must be borne in mind that the wind is composite. The wind is believed to be simple, but it is by no means simple. Its power is not merely dynamic, it is chemical also; but this is not all, it is magnetic. Its effects are often inexplicable. The wind is as much electrical as aerial. Certain winds coincide with the *auroras boreales*. The wind blowing from the bank of the Aiguilles rolls the waves one hundred feet high; a fact observed with astonishment by Dumont d'Urville. The corvette, he says, "knew not what to obey."

In the South Seas the waters will sometimes become inflated like an outbreak of immense tumours; and at such times the ocean becomes so terrible that the savages fly that they may no longer see it. The blasts in the North Seas are different. They are mingled with sharp points of ice; and their gusts, unfit to breathe, will blow the sledges of the Esquimaux backwards on the snow. Other winds burn. It is the simoon of Africa which is the typhoon of China and the samiel of India. Simoon, typhoon, and

samiel are believed to be the names of demons. They descend from the heights of the mountains. A storm vitrified the volcano of Toluca. This hot wind, a whirlwind of inky colour, rushing upon red clouds, is alluded to in the Vedas: "Behold the black god, who comes to steal the red cows." In all these facts we trace the presence of the electric mystery.

The wind indeed is full of it; so is the waves. The sea, too, is composite in its nature. Under its waves of water which we see, it has its waves of force which are invisible. Its constituents are innumerable. Of all the elements, the ocean is the most indivisible and the most profound.

Endeavour to conceive this chaos so enormous that it dwarfs all other things to one level. It is the universal recipient, reservoir of germs of life, and mould of transformations. It amasses and then disperses, it accumulates and then sows, it devours and then creates. It receives all the waste and refuse waters of the earth, and converts them into treasure. It is solid in the iceberg, liquid in the wave, fluid in the estuary. Regarded as matter, it is a mass; regarded as a force, it is an abstraction. It equalizes and unites all phenomena. It may be called the infinite in combination. By force and disturbance it arrives at transparency. It dissolves all differences, and absorbs them into its own unity. Its elements are so numerous that it becomes identity. One of its drops is complete, and represents the whole. From the abundance of its tempests, it attains equilibrium. Plato beheld the mazy dances of the spheres. Strange fact, though not the less real, the ocean, in the vast terrestrial journey round the sun, becomes, with its flux and reflux, the balance of the globe.

In a phenomenon of the sea, all other phenomena are resumed. The sea is blown out of a waterspout as from a siphon; the storm observes the principle of the pump; the lightning issues from the sea as from the air. Aboard ships dull shocks are sometimes felt, and an odour of sulphur issues from the receptacles of chain cables. The ocean boils. "The devil has put the sea in his kettle," said De Ruyter. In certain tempests, which characterize the equinoxes and the return to equilibrium of the prolific power of nature, vessels breasting the foam seem to give out a kind of fire, phosphoric lights chase each other along the rigging, so close sometimes to the sailors at their work that the latter stretch forth their hands and try to catch, as they fly, these birds of flame. After the great earthquake of Lisbon, a blast of hot air, as from a furnace, drove before it towards the city a wave sixty feet high. The oscillation of the ocean is closely related to the convulsions of the earth.

These immeasurable forces produce sometimes extraordinary inundations. At the end of the year 1864, one of the Maldiv Islands, at a hundred leagues from the Malabar coast, actually foundered in the sea. It sunk to the bottom



like a shipwrecked vessel. The fishermen who sailed from it in the morning, found nothing when they returned at night; scarcely could they distinguish their villages under the sea. On this occasion boats were the spectators of the wrecks of houses.

In Europe, where nature seems restrained by the presence of civilization, such events are rare, and are thought impossible. Nevertheless, Jersey and Guernsey originally formed part of Gaul, and at the moment while we are writing these lines, an equinoctial gale has demolished a great portion of the cliff of the Firth of Forth in Scotland.

Nowhere do these terrific forces appear more formidably conjoined than in the surprising strait known as the Lyse-Fiord. The Lyse-Fiord is the most terrible of all the Gut Rocks of the ocean. Their terrors are there complete. It is in the Northern Sea, near the inhospitable Gulf of Stavanger, and in the 59th degree of latitude. The water is black and heavy, and subject to intermitting storms. In this sea, and in the midst of this solitude, rises a great sombre street—a street for no human footsteps. None ever pass through there; no ship ever ventures in. It is a corridor ten leagues in length, between two rocky walls of three thousand feet in height. Such is the passage which presents an entrance to the sea. The defile has its elbows and angles like all these streets of the sea—never straight, having been formed by the irregular action of the water. In the Lyse-Fiord, the sea is almost always tranquil; the sky above is serene; the place terrible. Where is the wind? Not on high. Where is the thunder? Not in the heavens. The wind is under the sea; the lightnings within the rock. Now and then there is a convulsion of the water. At certain moments, when there is perhaps not a cloud in the sky, nearly half way up the perpendicular rock, at a thousand or fifteen hundred feet above the water, and rather on the southern than on the northern side, the rock suddenly thunders, lightnings dart forth, and then retire like those toys which lengthen out and spring back again in the hands of children. They contract and enlarge; strike the opposite cliff, re-enter the rock, issue forth again, recommence their play, multiply their heads and tips of flame, grow bristling with points, strike wherever they can, recommence again, and then are extinguished with a sinister abruptness. Flocks of birds fly wide in terror. Nothing is more mysterious than that artillery issuing out of the invisible. One cliff attacks the other, raining their lightning blows from side to side. Their war concerns not man. It signals the ancient enmity of two rocks in the impassable gulf.

In the Lyse-Fiord, the wind whirls like the water in an estuary; the rock performs the function of the clouds, and the thunder breaks forth like volcanic fire. This strange defile is a voltaic pile; its plates are the double line of cliffs.

## VI.

## A STABLE FOR THE HORSE.

GILLIATT was sufficiently familiar with marine rocks to grapple in earnest with the Douvres. Before all, as we have just said, it was necessary to find a safe shelter for the barge.

The double row of reefs, which stretched in a sinuous form behind the Douvres, connected itself here and there with other rocks, and suggested the existence of blind passages and hollows opening out into the straggling way, and joining again to the principal defile like branches to a trunk.

The lower part of these rocks was covered with kelp, the upper part with lichens. The uniform level of the seaweed marked the line of the water at the height of the tide, and the limit of the sea in calm weather. The points which the water had not touched presented those silver and golden hues communicated to marine granite by the white and yellow lichen.

A crust of conoidal shells covered the rock at certain points, the dry rot of the granite.

At other points in the retreating angles, where fine sand had accumulated, ribbed on its surface rather by the wind than by the waves, appeared tufts of blue thistles.

In the indentations, sheltered from the winds, could be traced the little perforations made by the sea-urchin. This shelly mass of prickles, which moves about a living ball, by rolling on its spines, and the armour of which is composed of ten thousand pieces, artistically adjusted and welded together—the sea-urchin, which is popularly called, for some unknown reason, "Aristotle's Lantern," wears away the granite with his five teeth, and lodges himself in the hole. It is in such holes that the samphire gatherers find them. They cut them in halves and eat them raw, like an oyster. Some steep their bread in the soft flesh. Hence its other name, "Sea-egg."

The tips of the further reefs, left out of the water by the receding tide, extended close under the escarpment of "The Man" to a sort of creek, enclosed nearly on all sides by rocky walls. Here was evidently a possible harbourage. It had the form of a horseshoe, and opened only on one side to the east wind, which is the least violent of all winds in that sea labyrinth. The water was shut in there, and almost motionless. The shelter seemed comparatively safe. Gilliatt, moreover, had not much choice.

If he wished to take advantage of the low water, it was important to make haste.

The weather continued to be fine and calm. The insolent sea was for a while in a gentle mood.

Gilliatt descended, put on his shoes again, unmoored the cable, re-embarked, and pushed out into the water. He used the oars, coasting the side of the rock.

Having reached "The Man" rock, he examined the entrance to the little creek.

A fixed, wavy line in the motionless sea, a sort of wrinkle, imperceptible to any eye but that of a sailor, marked the channel.

Gilliatt studied for a moment its lineament, almost indistinct under the water; then he steered off a little in order to veer at ease, and steer well into channel, and suddenly, with a stroke of the oars, he entered the little bay.

He sounded.

The anchorage appeared to be excellent.

The sloop would be protected there against almost any of the contingencies of the season.

The most formidable reefs have quiet nooks of this sort. The ports which are thus found among the breakers are like the hospitality of the fierce Bedouin—friendly and sure.

Gilliatt placed the sloop as near as he could to "The Man," but still far enough to escape grazing the rock, and he cast his two anchors.

That done, he crossed his arms and reflected on his position.

The sloop was sheltered. Here was one problem solved; but another remained. Where could he now shelter himself?

He had the choice of two places: the sloop itself, with its corner of cabin, which was scarcely habitable, and the summit of the "The Man" rock, which was not difficult to scale.

From one or other of these refuges it was possible at low water, by jumping from rock to rock, to gain the passage between the Douvres where the *Durande* was fixed almost without wetting the feet.

But low water lasts but a short while, and all the rest of the time he would be cut off either from his shelter or from the wreck by more than two hundred fathoms. Swimming among breakers is difficult at all times; if there is the least sea it is impossible.

He was driven to give up the idea of shelter in the sloop or on "The Man."

No resting-place was possible among the neighbouring rocks.

The summits of the lower ones disappeared twice a day beneath the rising tide.

The summit of the higher ones were constantly swept by the flakes of foam, and promised nothing but an inhospitable drenching.

No choice remained but the wreck itself.

Was it possible to seek refuge there?

Gilliatt hoped it might be.

## VII.

### A CHAMBER FOR THE VOYAGER.

HALF an hour afterwards, Gilliatt, having returned to the wreck, climbed to the deck, went below, descended into the hold, completing the summary survey of his first visit.

By the help of the capstan he had raised to the deck of the *Durande* the package which he had made of the lading of the sloop. The capstan had worked well. Bars for turning it were

not wanting. Gilliatt had only to take his choice among the heap of wreck.

He found among the fragments a chisel, dropped, no doubt, from the carpenter's box, and which he added to his little stock of tools.

Besides this—for in poverty of appliances so complete everything counts for a little—he had his jack-knife in his pocket.

Gilliatt worked the entire day on the wreck, clearing away, propping, arranging.

At nightfall he observed the following facts.

The entire wreck shook in the wind. The carcass trembled at every step he took. There was nothing stable or strong except the portion of the hull jammed between the rocks which contained the engine. There the beams were powerfully supported by the granite walls.

Fixing his home in the *Durande* would be imprudent. It would increase the weight; but, far from adding to her burden, it was important to lighten it. To burden the wreck in any way was the very contrary of what he wanted.

The mass of ruin required, in fact, the most careful management. It was like a sick man at the approach of dissolution. The wind would do enough to help it to its end.

It was, moreover, unfortunate enough to be compelled to work there. The amount of disturbance which the wreck would have to withstand would necessarily distress it, perhaps beyond its strength.

Besides, if any accident should happen in the night while Gilliatt was sleeping, he must necessarily perish with the vessel. No assistance was possible; all would be over. In order to help the shattered vessel, it was absolutely necessary to remain outside it.

How to be outside, and yet near it, this was the problem.

The difficulty became more complicated as he considered it.

Where could he find a shelter under such conditions?

Gilliatt reflected.

There remained nothing but the two Douvres. They seemed hopeless enough.

From below it was possible to distinguish upon the upper plateau of the Great Douvres a sort of protuberance.

High rocks with flattened summits, like the Great Douvre and "The Man," are a sort of decapitated peaks. They abound among the mountains and in the ocean. Certain rocks, particularly those which are met with in the open sea, bear marks like half-felled trees. They have the appearance of having received blows from a hatchet. They have been subjected, in fact, to the blows of the gale, that indefatigable pioneer of the sea.

There are other still more profound causes of marine convulsions. Hence the innumerable bruises upon these primeval masses of granite. Some of these sea giants have their heads struck off.

Sometimes these heads, from some inexplicable causes, do not fall, but remain shattered



on the summit of the mutilated trunk. This singularity is by no means rare. The Devil's Rock, at Guernsey, and the Table, in the Valley of Anweiler, illustrate some of the most surprising features of this strange geological enigma.

Some such phenomena had probably fashioned the summit of the Great Douvre.

If the protuberance which could be observed on the plateau were not a regular irregularity in the stone, it must necessarily be some remaining fragment of the shattered summit.

Perhaps the fragment might contain some excavation; some hole into which a man could creep for cover. Gilliatt asked for no more.

But how could he reach the plateau? How could he scale that perpendicular wall, hard and polished as a pebble, half covered with the growth of glutinous *confervæ*, and having the slippery look of a soapy surface.

The ridge of the plateau was at least thirty feet above the deck of the Durande.

Gilliatt took out of his box of tools the knotted cord, hooked it to his belt by the grapnel, and set to work to scale the Little Douvre. The ascent became more difficult as he climbed. He had forgotten to take off his shoes, a fact which increased the difficulty. With great labour and difficulty, however, he reached the point. Safely arrived there, he raised himself and stood erect. There was scarcely room for his two feet. To make it his lodging would be difficult. A Stylite might have contented himself there; Gilliatt, more luxurious in his requirements, wanted something more commodious.

The Little Douvre, leaning towards the great one, looked from a distance as if it was saluting it, and the space between the Douvres, which was some score of feet below, was only eight or ten at the highest points.

From the spot to which he had climbed, Gilliatt saw more distinctly the rocky excrescence which partly covered the plateau of the Great Douvre.

This plateau rose three fathoms at least above his head.

A precipice separated him from it. The curved escarpment of the Little Douvre sloped away out of sight beneath him.

Gilliatt detached the knotted rope from his belt, took a rapid glance at the dimensions of the rock, and slung the grapnel up to the plateau.

The grapnel scratched the rock, and slipped. The knotted rope with the hooks at its end fell down beneath his feet, swinging against the side of the Little Douvre.

Gilliatt renewed the attempt; slung the rope further, aiming at the granite protuberance, in which he could perceive crevices and scratches.

The cast was this time so neat and skilful that the hooks caught.

Gilliatt pulled from below. A portion of the rock broke away, and the knotted rope with its heavy iron came down once more, striking the escarpment beneath his feet.

Gilliatt slung the grapnel a third time.

It did not fall.

He put a strain upon the rope; it resisted. The grapnel was firmly anchored.

The hooks had caught in some fracture of the plateau which Gilliatt could not see.

It was necessary to trust his life to that unknown support.

Gilliatt did not hesitate.

The matter was urgent. He was compelled to take the shortest route.

Moreover, to descend again to the deck of the Durande in order to devise some other step was impossible. A slip was probable, and a fall almost certain. It was easier to climb than to descend.

Gilliatt's movements were decisive, as are those of all good sailors. He never wasted force. He always proportioned his efforts to the work in hand. Hence the prodigies of strength which he executed with ordinary muscles. His biceps was no more powerful than that of ordinary men, but his heart was firmer. He added, in fact, to strength which is physical, energy which belongs to the moral faculties.

The feat to be accomplished was appalling.

It was to cross the space between the two Douvres, hanging only by this slender line.

Oftentimes, in the path of duty and devotedness, the figure of death rises before men to present these terrible questions:

Wilt thou do this? asks the shadow.

Gilliatt tested the cord again; the grappling-iron held firm.

Wrapping his left hand in his handkerchief, Gilliatt grasped the knotted cord with his right hand, which he covered with his left; then stretching out one foot, and striking out sharply with the other against the rock, in order that the impetus might prevent the rope twisting, he precipitated himself from the height of the Little Douvre on to the escarpment of the great one.

The shock was severe.

There was a rebound.

His clenched fists struck the rocks in their turn; the handkerchief had loosened, and they were scratched; they had indeed narrowly escaped being crushed.

Gilliatt remained hanging there a moment dizzy.

He was sufficiently master of himself not to let go his hold of the cord.

A few moments passed in jerks and oscillations before he could catch the cord with his feet; but he succeeded at last.

Recovering himself, and holding the cord at last between his naked feet as with two hands, he gazed into the depth below.

He had no anxiety about the length of the cord, which had many a time served him for great heights. The cord, in fact, trailed upon the deck of the Durande.

Assured of being able to descend again, he began to climb hand over hand, and still clinging with his feet.

In a few moments he had gained the plateau.

Never before had any creature without wings found a footing there. The plateau was covered in parts with the dung of birds. It was an irregular trapezium, a mass struck off from the colossal granitic prism of the Great Douvre. This block was hollowed in the centre like a basin—a work of the rain.

Gilliatt, in fact, had guessed correctly.

At the southern angle of the block he found a mass of superimposed rocks, probably fragments of the fallen summit. These rocks, looking like a heap of giant paving-stones, would have left room for a wild beast, if one could have found its way there, to secrete himself between them. They supported themselves confusedly one against the other, leaving interstices like a heap of ruins. They formed neither grottoes nor caves, but the pile was full of holes like a sponge. One of these holes was large enough to admit a man.

This recess had a flooring of moss and a few tufts of grass. Gilliatt could fit himself in it as in a kind of sheath.

The recess at its entrance was about two feet high. It contracted towards the bottom. Stone coffins sometimes have this form. The mass of rocks behind lying towards the southwest, the recess was sheltered from the showers, but was open to the cold north wind.

Gilliatt was satisfied with the place.

The two chief problems were solved; the sloop had a harbour, and he had found a shelter.

The chief merit of his cave was its accessibility from the wreck.

The grappling-iron of the knotted cord having fallen between two blocks, had become firmly hooked, but Gilliatt rendered it more difficult to give way by rolling a huge stone upon it.

He was now free to operate at leisure upon the Durande.

Henceforth he was at home.

The great Douvre was his dwelling; the Durande was his workshop.

Nothing was more simple for him than going to and fro, ascending and descending.

He dropped down easily by the knotted cord on to the deck.

The day's work was a good one, the enterprise had begun well; he was satisfied, and began to feel hungry.

He untied his basket of provisions, opened his knife, cut a slice of smoked beef, took a bite out of his brown loaf, drank a draught from his can of fresh water, and supped admirably.

To do well and eat well are two satisfactions. A full stomach resembles an easy conscience.

His supper was ended, and there was still before him a little more daylight. He took advantage of it to begin the lightening of the wreck—an urgent necessity.

He had passed part of the day in gathering up the fragments. He put on one side, in the strong compartment which contained the ma-

chine, all that might become of use to him, such as wood, iron, cordage, and canvas. What was useless he cast into the sea.

The cargo of the sloop hoisted on to the deck by the capstan, compact as he had made it, was an encumbrance. Gilliatt surveyed the species of niche, at a height within his reach, in the side of the little Douvre. These natural closets, not shut in, it is true, are often seen in the rocks. It struck him that it was possible to trust some stores to this dépôt, and he accordingly placed in the back of the recess his two boxes containing his tools and his clothing, and his two bags containing the rye-meal and the biscuit. In the front—a little too near the edge perhaps, but he had no other place—he rested his basket of provisions.

He had taken care to remove from the box of clothing his sheepskin, his loose coat with a hood, and his waterproof overalls.

To lessen the hold of the wind upon the knotted cord, he made the lower extremity fast to one of the riders of the Durande.

The Durande being much driven in, this rider was bent a good deal, and it held the end of the cord as firmly as a tight hand.

There was still the difficulty of the upper end of the cord. To control the lower part was well, but at the summit of the escarpment, at the spot where the knotted cord met the ridge of the plateau, there was reason to fear that it would be fretted and worn away by the sharp angle of the rock.

Gilliatt searched in the heap of rubbish in reserve, and took from it some rags of sailcloth, and from a bunch of old cables he pulled out some strands of rope-yarn with which he filled his pockets.

A sailor would have guessed that he intended to bind with these pieces of sailcloth and ends of yarn the part of the knotted rope upon the edge of the rock, so as to preserve it from all friction—an operation which is called “keckling.”

Having provided himself with these things, he drew on his overalls over his legs, put on his waterproof coat over his jacket, drew its hood over his red cap, hung the sheepskin round his neck by the two legs, and, clothed in this complete panoply, he grasped the cord, now firmly fixed to the side of the Great Douvre, and mounted to the assault of that sombre citadel in the sea.

In spite of his scratched hands, Gilliatt easily regained the summit.

The last pale tints of sunset were fading in the sky. It was night upon the sea below. A little light still lingered upon the height of the Douvre.

Gilliatt took advantage of this remains of daylight to bind the knotted rope. He wound it round again and again at the part which passed over the edge of the rock, with a bandage of several thicknesses of canvas strongly tied at every turn. The whole resembled in some degree the padding which actresses place upon



their knees, to prepare them for the agonies and supplications of the fifth act.

This binding completely accomplished, Gilliatt rose from his stooping position.

For some moments, while he had been busied in his task, he had had a confused sense of a singular fluttering in the air.

It resembled, in the silence of the evening, the noise which an immense bat might make with the beating of its wings.

Gilliatt raised his eyes.

A great black circle was revolving over his head in the pale twilight sky.

Such circles are seen in pictures round the heads of saints. These, however, are golden, on a dark ground, while the circle around Gilliatt was dark, upon a pale ground. The effect was strange. It spread round the Great Douvre like the aureole of night.

The circle drew nearer, then retired; grew narrower, and then spread wide again.

It was an immense flight of gulls, sea-mews, frigate-birds, and sea-swallows—a vast multitude of affrighted sea-birds.

The Great Douvre was probably their lodging, and they were coming to rest for the night. Gilliatt had taken a chamber in their home. It was evident that their unexpected fellow-lodger disturbed them.

A man there was an object they had never beheld before.

Their wild flutter continued for some time.

They seemed to be waiting for the stranger to leave the place.

Gilliatt followed them dreamily with his eyes.

The flying multitude seemed at last to give up their design. The circle suddenly took a spiral form, and the cloud of sea-birds settled down upon "The Man" rock at the extremity of the group, where they seemed to be conferring and deliberating.

Gilliatt, after settling down in his alcove of granite, and covering a stone for a pillow for his head, could hear the birds for a long time chattering one after the other, or croaking, as if in turns.

Then they were silent, and all were sleeping—the birds upon their rock, Gilliatt upon his.

## VIII.

### IMPORTUNEQUE VOLUCRES.

GILLIATT slept well; but he was cold, and this awoke him from time to time. He had naturally placed his feet at the bottom, and his head at the entrance to his cave. He had not taken the precaution to remove from his couch a number of angular stones, which did not by any means conduce to sleep.

Now and then he half opened his eyes.

At intervals he heard loud noises. It was the rising tide entering the caverns of the rocks with a sound like the report of a cannon.

All the circumstances of his position conspired to produce the effect of a vision. Hallucinations seemed to surround him. The vagueness of night increased this effect, and Gilliatt felt himself plunged into some region of unrealities. He asked himself if all were not a dream.

Then he dropped to sleep again; and this time, in a veritable dream, found himself at the *Bû de la Rue*, at the *Bravées*, at *St. Sampson*. He heard *Déruchette* singing; he was among realities. While he slept, he seemed to wake and live; when he awoke again, he appeared to be sleeping.

In truth, from this time forward he lived in a dream.

Towards the middle of the night a confused murmur filled the air. Gilliatt had a vague consciousness of it even in his sleep. It was perhaps a breeze arising.

Once, when awakened by a cold shiver, he opened his eyes a little wider than before. Clouds were moving in the zenith; the moon was flying through the sky, with one large star following closely in her footsteps.

Gilliatt's mind was full of the incidents of his dreams. The wild outlines of things in the darkness were exaggerated by this confusion with the impressions of his sleeping hours.

At daybreak he was half frozen, but he slept soundly.

The sudden daylight aroused him from a slumber which might have been dangerous. The alcove faced the rising sun.

Gilliatt yawned, stretched himself, and sprang out of his sleeping-place.

His sleep had been so deep that he could not at first recall the circumstances of the night before.

By degrees the feeling of reality returned, and he began to think of breakfast.

The weather was calm, the sky cool and serene. The clouds were gone, the night-wind had cleared the horizon, and the sun rose brightly. Another fine day was commencing. Gilliatt felt joyful.

He threw off his overcoat and his leggins; rolled them up in the sheepskin, with the wool inside, fastened the roll with a length of rope-yarn, and pushed it into the cavern for a shelter in case of rain.

This done, he made his bed—an operation which consisted in removing the stones which had annoyed him in the night.

His bed made, he slid down the cord on to the deck of the *Durande* and approached the niche where he had placed his basket of provisions. As it was very near the edge, the wind in the night had swept it down, and rolled it into the sea.

It was evident that it would not be easy to recover it. There was a spirit of mischief and malice in a wind which had sought out his basket in that position.

It was the commencement of hostilities. Gilliatt understood the token.

To those who live in a state of rude familiarity with the sea, it becomes natural to regard the wind as an individuality, and the rocks as sentient beings.

Nothing remained but the biscuit and the rye-meal, except the shell-fish, on which the shipwrecked sailor had supported a lingering existence upon "The Man" rock.

It was useless to think of subsisting by net or line fishing. Fish are naturally averse to the neighbourhood of rocks. The drag and bow net fishers would waste their labour among the breakers, the points of which would be destructive only to their nets.

Gilliatt breakfasted on a few limpets which he plucked with difficulty from the rocks. He narrowly escaped breaking his knife in the attempt.

While he was making his spare meal, he was sensible of a strange disturbance on the sea. He looked around.

It was a swarm of gulls and sea-mews which had just alighted upon some low rocks, and were beating their wings, tumbling over each other, screaming, and shrieking. All were swarming noisily upon the same point. This horde with beak and talons were evidently pilaging something.

It was Gilliatt's basket.

Rolled down upon a sharp point by the wind, the basket had burst open. The birds had gathered round immediately. They were carrying off in their beaks all sorts of fragments of provisions. Gilliatt recognised from the distance his smoked beef and his salted fish.

It was their turn now to be aggressive. The birds had taken to reprisals. Gilliatt had robbed them of their lodging, they deprived him of his supper.

## IX.

### THE ROCK, AND HOW GILLIATT USED IT.

A WEEK passed.

Although it was in the rainy season no rain fell, a fact for which Gilliatt felt thankful. But the work he had entered upon surpassed, in appearance at least, the power of human hand and skill. Success appeared so improbable that the attempt seemed like madness.

It is not until a task is fairly grappled with that its difficulties and perils become fully manifest. There is nothing like making a commencement for making evident how difficult it will be to come to the end. Every beginning is a struggle against resistance. The first step is an exorable undeceiver. A difficulty which we come to touch pricks like a thorn.

Gilliatt found himself immediately in the presence of obstacles.

In order to raise the engine of the *Durande* from the wreck in which it was three parts buried, with any chance of success—in order to accomplish a salvage in such a place and in such a season, it seemed almost necessary to be

a legion of men. Gilliatt was alone; a complete apparatus of carpenters' and engineers' tools and implements were wanted. Gilliatt had a saw, a hatchet, a chisel, and a hammer. He wanted both a good workshop and a good shed; Gilliatt had not a roof to cover him. Provisions, too, were necessary, but he had not even bread.

Any one who could have seen Gilliatt working on the rock during all that first week might have been puzzled to determine the nature of his operations. He seemed to be no longer thinking either of the *Durande* or the two *Douvres*. He was busy only among the breakers; he seemed absorbed in saving the smaller parts of the shipwreck. He took advantage of every high tide to strip the reefs of everything which the shipwreck had distributed among them. He went from rock to rock, picking up whatever the sea had cast among them—tatters of sail-cloth, pieces of iron, splinters of panels, shattered planking, broken yards—here a beam, there a chain, there a pulley.

At the same time he carefully surveyed all the recesses of the rocks. To his great disappointment none were habitable. He had suffered from the cold in the night, where he lodged between the stones on the summit of the rock, and he would gladly have found some better refuge.

Two of those recesses were somewhat extensive. Although the natural pavement of rock was almost everywhere oblique and uneven, it was possible to stand upright and even to walk within them. The wind and the rain wandered there at will, but the highest tides did not reach them. They were near the Little *Douvre*, and were approachable at any time. Gilliatt decided that one should serve him as a store-house, the other as a forge.

With all the sail, rope-bands, and all the reef-earrings he could collect, he made packages of the fragments of wreck, tying up the wood and iron in bundles, and the canvas in parcels. He lashed all these together carefully. As the rising tide approached these packages, he began to drag them across the reefs to his storehouse. In a hollow of the rocks he had found a top rope, by means of which he had been able to haul even the large pieces of timber. In the same manner he dragged from the sea the numerous portions of chains which he found scattered among the breakers.

Gilliatt worked at these tasks with astonishing activity and tenacity. He accomplished whatever he attempted—nothing could withstand his ant-like perseverance.

At the end of the week he had gathered into this granite warehouse of marine stores, and ranged into order, all this miscellaneous and shapeless mass of salvage. There was a corner for the tacks of sails and a corner for the sheets. Bowlines were not mixed with halliards; parcels were arranged according to their number of holes. The coverings of rope-yarn, unwound from the broken anchorings, were tied in bunch-



es; the dead-eyes without pulleys were separated from the tackle-blocks. Belaying-pins, bull's-eyes, preventer-shrouds, down-hauls, snatch-blocks, pendants, kevels, trusses, stoppers, fire-booms, if they were not completely damaged by the storm, occupied different compartments. All the cross-beams, timber-work, uprights, stanchions, mast-heads, binding-strakes, port-lids and clamps, were heaped up apart. Wherever it was possible, he had fixed the fragments of planks from the vessel's bottom one in the other. There was no confusion between reef-points and nippers of the cable, nor of crow's-feet with tow-lines; nor of pulleys of the small with pulleys of the large ropes; nor of fragments from the waist with fragments from the stern. A place had been reserved for a portion of the cat-harpings of the *Durande*, which had supported the shrouds of the topmast and the futtock-shrouds. Every portion had its place. The entire wreck was there classed and ticketed. It was a sort of chaos in a storehouse.

A stay-sail, fixed by huge stones, served, though torn and damaged, to protect what the rain might have injured.

Shattered as were the bows of the wreck, Gilliatt had succeeded in saving the two cat-heads with their three pulley-wheels.

He had found the bowsprit too, and had had much trouble in unrolling its gammoning; it was very hard and tight, having been, according to custom, made by the help of the windlass, and in dry weather. Gilliatt, however, persevered until he had detached it, this thick rope promising to be very useful to him.

He had been equally successful in discovering the little anchor, which had become fast in the hollow of a reef, where the receding tide had left it uncovered.

In what had been Tangrouille's cabin he had found a piece of chalk, which he preserved carefully. He reflected that he might have some marks to make.

A fire-bucket, and several pails in pretty good condition, completed his stock of working materials.

All that remained of the store of coal of the *Durande* he carried into the warehouse.

In a week this salvage of debris; the rock was swept clean, and the *Durande* was lightened. Nothing remained now to burden the hull except the machinery.

The portion of the fore-bulwark which hung to it did not distress the hull. It hung without dragging, being partly sustained by a ledge of rock. It was, however, large and broad, and heavy to drag, and would have encumbered his warehouse too much. This bulwarking looked something like a boat-builder's stocks. Gilliatt left it where it was.

He had been profoundly thoughtful during all this labour. He had sought in vain for the figure-head—the “doll,” as the Guernsey folks called it, of the *Durande*. It was one of the things which the waves had carried away for ever. Gilliatt would have given his hands to

find it, if he had not had such peculiar need of them at the time.

At the entrance to the storehouse and outside were two heaps of refuse—a heap of iron good for forging, and a heap of wood good for burning.

Gilliatt was always at work at early dawn. Except his time of sleep he did not take a moment of repose.

The wild sea-birds, flying hither and thither, watched over him at his work.

## X.

### THE FORGE.

THE warehouse completed, Gilliatt constructed his forge.

The other recess which he had chosen had within it a species of passage like a gallery in a mine of pretty good depth. He had had at first an idea of making this his lodging, but the draught was so continuous and so persevering in this passage that he had been compelled to give it up. This current of air, incessantly renewed, first gave him the notion of the forge. Since it could not be his chamber, he was determined that this cabin should be his smithy. To bend obstacles to our purposes is a great step towards triumph. The wind was Gilliatt's enemy. Gilliatt set about making it his servant.

The proverb applied to certain kinds of men—“fit for everything, good for nothing”—may also be applied to the hollows of rocks. They give no advantages gratuitously. On one side we find a hollow fashioned conveniently in the shape of a bath, but it allows the water to run away through a fissure. Here is a rocky chamber, but without a roof; here a bed of moss, but oozy with wet; here an arm-chair, but one of hard stone.

The forge which Gilliatt intended was roughly sketched out by Nature, but nothing could be more troublesome than to reduce this rough sketch to manageable shape, to transform this cavern into a laboratory and smith's shop. With three or four large rocks, shaped like a funnel, and ending in a narrow fissure, chance had constructed there a species of vast misshapen blower, of very different power to those huge old forge bellows of fourteen feet long, which poured out at every breath ninety-eight thousand inches of air. This was quite a different sort of construction. The proportions of the hurricane cannot be definitely measured.

This excess of force was an embarrassment. The incessant draught was difficult to regulate.

The cavern had two inconveniences: the wind traversed it from end to end; so did the water. This was not the water of the sea, but a continual little trickling stream, more like a spring than a torrent.

The foam, cast incessantly by the surf upon the rocks sometimes more than a hundred feet

in the air, had filled with sea-water a natural cave situated among the high rocks overlooking the excavation. The overflows of this reservoir caused, a little behind the escarpment, a fall of water of about an inch in breadth, and descending four or five fathoms. An occasional contribution from the rains also helped to fill the reservoir. From time to time a passing cloud dropped a shower into the rocky basin, always overflowing. The water was brackish, and unfit to drink, but clear. This rill of water fell in graceful drops from the extremities of the long marine grasses, as from the ends of a length of hair.

Gilliatt was struck with the idea of making this water serve to regulate the draught in the cave. By the means of a funnel made of planks roughly and hastily put together to form two or three pipes, one of which was fitted with a valve, and of a large tub arranged as a lower reservoir, without checks or counterweight, and completed solely by air-tight stuffing above and air-holes below, Gilliatt, who, as we have already said, was handy at the forge and at the mechanic's bench, succeeded in constructing, instead of the forge-bellows, which he did not possess, an apparatus less perfect than what is known nowadays by the name of a "cagniardelle," but less rude than what the people of the Pyrenees anciently called a "trompe."

He had some rye-meal, and he manufactured with it some paste. He had some white cord, which picked out into tow. With this paste and tow, and some bits of wood, he stopped all the crevices of the rock, leaving only a little air-passage made of a powder-flask which he had found aboard the *Durande*, and which had served for loading the signal gun. This powder-flask was directed horizontally to a large stone, which Gilliatt made the hearth of the forge. A stopper made of a piece of tow served to close it in case of need.

After this, Gilliatt heaped up the wood and coal upon the hearth, struck his steel against the bare rock, caught a spark upon a handful of loose tow, and having ignited it, soon lighted his forge fire.

He tried the blower: it worked admirably.

Gilliatt felt the pride of a Cyclops: he was the master of air, water, and fire. Master of the air; for he had given a kind of lungs to the wind, and changed the rude draught into a useful blower. Master of water, for he had converted the little cascade into a "trompe." Master of fire, for out of this moist rock he had struck a flame.

The cave being almost everywhere open to the sky, the smoke issued freely, blackening the curved escarpment. The rocks which seemed destined for ever to receive only the white foam, became now familiar with the blackening smoke.

Gilliatt selected for an anvil a large smooth round stone, of about the required shape and dimensions. It formed a base for the blows of his hammer, but one that might fly and was very dangerous. One of the extremities of this

block, rounded and ending in a point, might, for want of anything better, serve instead of a conoid bicorn; but the other kind of bicorn of the pyramidal form was wanting. It was the ancient stone anvil of the Troglodytes. The surface, polished by the waves, had almost the firmness of steel.

He regretted not having brought his anvil. As he did not know that the *Durande* had been broken in two by the tempest, he had hoped to find the carpenter's chest and all his tools generally kept in the fore hold. But it was precisely the fore part of the vessel which had been carried away.

These two excavations which Gilliatt had found in the rock were contiguous. The warehouse and the forge communicated with each other.

Every evening, when his work was ended, Gilliatt supped on a little biscuit, moistened in water, a sea-urchin or a crab, or a few *châtaignes de mer*, the only food to be found among those rocks; and shivering like his knotted cord, mounted again to sleep in his cell upon the *Grand Douvre*.

The very materialism of his daily occupation increased the kind of abstraction in which he lived. To be steeped too deeply in realities is in itself a cause of visionary moods. His bodily labour, with its infinite variety of details, detracted nothing from the sensation of stupor which arose from the strangeness of his position and his work. Ordinary bodily fatigue is a thread which binds man to the earth, but the very peculiarity of the enterprise he was engaged in kept him in a sort of ideal twilight region. There were times when he seemed to be striking blows with his hammer in the clouds. At other moments, his tools appeared to him like arms. He had a singular feeling, as if he was repressing or providing against some latent danger of attack. Untwisting ropes, unravelling threads of yarn in a sail, or propping up a couple of beams, appeared to him at such times like fashioning engines of war. The thousand minute pains which he took about his salvage operations produced at last in his mind the effect of precautions against aggressions little concealed, and easy to anticipate. He did not know the words which express the ideas, but he perceived them. His instincts became less and less those of the worker; his habits more and more those of the savage man.

His business there was to subdue and direct the powers of nature. He had an indistinct perception of it. A strange enlargement of his ideas!

Around him, far as eye could reach, was the vast prospect of endless labour wasted and lost. Nothing is more disturbing to the mind than the contemplation of the diffusion of forces at work in the unfathomable and illimitable space of the ocean. The mind tends naturally to seek the object of these forces. The unceasing movement in space, the unwearying sea, the clouds that seem ever hurrying to some place,



the vast mysterious prodigality of effort, all this is a problem. Whither does this perpetual movement tend? What do these winds construct? What do these giant blows build up? These howlings, shocks, and sobbings of the storm, what do they end in? and what is the business of this tumult? The ebb and flow of these questionings is eternal, as the flux and reflux of the sea. Gilliatt could answer for himself; his work he knew, but the agitation which surrounded him far and wide at all times perplexed him confusedly with its eternal questionings. Unknown to himself, mechanically, by the mere pressure of external things, and without any other effect than a strange, unconscious bewilderment, Gilliatt, in this dreamy mood, blended his own toil somehow with the prodigious wasted labours of the sea. How indeed, in that position, could he escape the influence of that mystery of the dread, laborious ocean? how do other than meditate, so far as meditation was possible, upon the vacillation of the waves, the perseverance of the foam, the imperceptible wearing down of rocks, the furious beatings of the four winds? How terrible that perpetual recommencement, that ocean bed, those Danaides-like clouds, all that travail and weariness for no end?

For no end? Not so! But for what? O Thou Infinite Unknown, Thou only knowest!

## XI.

### DISCOVERY.

A ROCK near the coast is sometimes visited by men; a rock in mid-ocean never. What object could any one have there? No supplies can be drawn thence; no fruit-trees are there, no pasturage, no beasts, no springs of water fitted for man's use. It stands aloft, a rock with its steep sides and summits above water, and its sharp points below. Nothing is to be found there but inevitable shipwreck.

This kind of rocks, which in the old sea dialect were called *Isolés*, are, as we have said, strange places. The sea is alone there; she works her own will. No token of terrestrial life disturbs her. Man is a terror to the sea; she is shy of his approach, and hides from him her deeds. But she is bolder among the lone sea rocks. The everlasting soliloquy of the waves is not troubled there. She labours at the rocks, repairs its damage, sharpens its peaks, makes them rugged or renews them. She pierces the granite, wears down the soft stone, and denudes the hard; she rummages, dismembers, bores, perforates, and grooves; she fills the rock with cells, and makes it sponge-like, hollows out the inside, or sculptures it without. In that secret mountain which is hers, she makes to herself caves, sanctuaries, palaces. She has her splendid and monstrous vegetation, composed of floating plants which bite, and of monsters which take root; and she

hides away all this terrible magnificence in the twilight of her deeps. Among the isolated rocks no eye watches over her; no spy embarrasses her movements. It is there that she develops at liberty her mysterious side, which is inaccessible to man. Here she keeps all strange secretions of life. Here that the unknown wonders of the sea are assembled.

Promontories, forelands, capes, headlands, breakers, and shoals, are veritable constructions. The geological changes of the earth are trifling compared with the vast operations of the ocean. These breakers, these habitations in the sea, these pyramids, and spouts of the foam, are the practitioners of a mysterious art which the author of this book has somewhere called "the Art of Nature." Their style is known by its vastness. The effects of chance seem here design. Its works are multiform. They abound in the mazy entanglement of the rock-coral groves, the sublimity of the cathedral, the extravagance of the pagoda, the amplitude of the mountain, the delicacy of the jeweller's work, the horror of the sepulchre. They are filled with cells like the wasps' nest, with dens like menageries, with subterranean passages like the haunts of moles, with dungeons like Bastilles, with ambuscades like a camp. They have their doors, but they are barricaded; their columns, but they are shattered; their towers, but they are tottering; their bridges, but they are broken. Their compartments are unaccommodating; these are fitted for the birds only, those only for fish. They are impassable. Their architectural style is variable and inconsistent; it regards or disregards at will the laws of equilibrium, breaks off, stops short, begins in the form of an archivolt, and ends in an architrave, block on block. Enceladus is the mason. A wondrous science of dynamics exhibits here its problems ready solved. Fearful overhanging blocks threaten, but fall not: the human mind cannot guess what power supports their bewildering masses. Blind entrances, gaps, and ponderous suspensions multiply and vary infinitely. The laws which regulate this Babel baffle human inductions. The great unknown architect plans nothing, but succeeds in all. Rocks massed together in confusion form a monstrous monument, defy reason, yet maintain equilibrium. Here is something more than strength; it is eternity. But order is wanting. The wild tumult of the waves seems to have passed into the wilderness of stone. It is like a tempest petrified and fixed for ever. Nothing is more impressive than that wild architecture; always standing, yet always seeming to fall; in which everything appears to give support, and yet to withdraw it. A struggle between opposing lines has resulted in the construction of an edifice, filled with traces of the efforts of those old antagonists, the ocean and the storm.

This architecture has its terrible masterpieces, of which the Douvres rock was one.

The sea had fashioned and perfected it with

a sinister solicitude. The snarling waters licked it into shape. It was hideous, treacherous, dark, full of hollows.

It had a complete row of submarine caverns ramifying and losing themselves in unfathomed depths. Some of the orifices of this labyrinth of passages were left exposed by the low tides. A man might enter there, but at his risk and peril.

Gilliat determined to explore all these grottoes for the purpose of his salvage labour. There was not one which was not repulsive. Everywhere about the caverns that strange aspect of an abattoir, those singular traces of slaughter appeared again in all the exaggeration of the ocean. No one who has not seen in excavations of this kind, upon the walls of everlasting granite, these hideous natural frescoes, can form a notion of their singularity.

These pitiless caverns, too, were false and sly. Woe betide him who would loiter there. The rising tide filled them to their roofs.

Rock limpets and edible mosses abounded among them.

They were obstructed by quantities of shingle, heaped together in their recesses. Some of their huge smooth stones weighed more than a ton. They were of every proportion and of every hue; but the greater part were blood-coloured. Some, covered with a hairy and glutinous sea-weed, seemed like large green moles boring a way into the rock.

Several of the caverns terminated abruptly in the form of a demi-cupola. Others, main arteries of a mysterious circulation, lengthened out in the rock in dark and tortuous fissures. They were the alleys of the submarine city; but they gradually contracted from their entrances, and at length left no way for a man to pass. Peering in by the help of a lighted torch, he could see nothing but dark hollows dripping with moisture.

One day, Gilliat, exploring, ventured into one of these fissures. The state of the tide favoured the attempt. It was a beautiful day of calm and sunshine. There was no fear of any accident from the sea to increase the danger.

Two necessities, as we have said, compelled him to undertake these explorations. He had to gather fragments of wreck and other things to aid him in his labour, and to search for crabs and cray-fish for his food. Shell-fish had begun to fail him on the rocks.

The fissure was narrow, and the passage difficult. Gilliat could see daylight beyond. He made an effort, contorted himself as much as he could, and penetrated into the cave as far as he was able.

He had reached, without suspecting it, the interior of the rock, upon the point of which Clubin had driven the Durande. Though abrupt and almost inaccessible without, it was hollowed within. It was full of galleries, pits, and chambers, like the tomb of an Egyptian king. This network of caverns was one of the most complicated of all that labyrinth, a labour of the

water, the undermining of the restless sea. The branches of the subterranean maze probably communicated with the sea without by more than one issue, some gaping at the level of the waves, the other profound and invisible. It was near here, but Gilliat knew it not, that Clubin had dived into the sea.

In this crocodile cave—where crocodiles, it is true, were not among the dangers—Gilliat wound about, clambered, struck his head occasionally, bent low and rose again, lost his footing and regained it many times, advancing laboriously. By degrees the gallery widened; a glimmer of daylight appeared, and he found himself suddenly at the entrance to a cavern of a singular kind.

## XII.

### THE INTERIOR OF AN EDIFICE UNDER THE SEA.

THE gleam of daylight was fortunate.

One step further, and Gilliat must have fallen into a pool, perhaps without bottom. The waters of these cavern pools are so cold and paralyzing as to prove fatal to the strongest swimmers.

There is, moreover, no means of remounting, or of hanging on to any part of their steep walls.

Gilliat stopped short. The crevice from which he had just issued ended in a narrow and slippery projection—a species of corbel in the peaked wall. He leaned against the side and surveyed it.

He was in a large cave. Over his head was a roofing not unlike the inside of a vast skull, which might have been imagined to have been recently dissected. The dripping ribs of the striated indentations of the roof seemed to imitate the branching fibres and jagged sutures of the bony cranium. A stony ceiling and a watery floor. The rippled waters between the four walls of the cave were like wavy paving tiles. The grotto was shut in on all sides. Not a window, not even an air-hole visible. No breach in the wall, no crack in the roof. The light came from below and through the water, a strange, sombre light.

Gilliat, the pupils of whose eyes had contracted during his explorations of the dusky corridor, could distinguish everything about him in the pale glimmer.

He was familiar, from having often visited them, with the caves of Plémont in Jersey, the Craux-Maille at Guernsey, the Boutiques at Sark; but none of these marvellous caverns could compare with the subterranean and submarine chamber into which he had made his way.

Under the water at his feet Gilliat could see a sort of drowned arch. This arch, a natural ogive fashioned by the waves, was glittering between its two dark and profound supports. It was by this submerged porch that the daylight entered into the cavern from the open sea. A strange light shooting upward from a gulf.



The glimmer spread out beneath the waters like a large fan, and was reflected on the rocks. Its direct rays, divided into long, broad shafts, appeared in strong relief against the darkness below, and becoming brighter or more dull from one rock to another, looked as if seen here and there through panes of glass. There was light in that cave, it is true, but it was the light that was unearthly. The beholder might have dreamed that he had descended in some other planet. The glimmer was an enigma, like the glaucous light from the eye-pupil of a Sphinx. The whole cave represented the interior of a death's head of enormous proportions, and of a strange splendour. The vault was the hollow of the brain, the arch the mouth; the sockets of the eyes were wanting. This mouth, alternately swallowing and rendering up the flux and reflux through its mouth wide opened to the full noonday without, seemed to drink in the light and vomit forth bitterness—a type of some beings intelligent and evil. The light, in traversing this inlet through the vitreous medium of the sea-water, became green, like a ray of starlight from Aldebaran. The water, filled with this moist light, appeared like a liquid emerald. A tint of aqua-marina of marvelous delicacy spread a soft hue throughout the cavern. The roof, with its cerebral lobes, and its rampant ramifications, like the fibres of nerves, gave out a tender reflection of chrysoprase. The ripples reflected on the roof were falling in order and dissolving again incessantly, and enlarging and contracting their glittering scales in a mysterious and mazy dance. They gave the beholder an impression of something weird and spectral: he wondered what prey secured, or what expectation about to be realized moved with a joyous thrill this magnificent network of living fire. From the projections of the vault and the angles of the rock hung lengths of delicate fibrous plants, bathing their roots, probably through the granite, in some upper pool of water, and distilling from their silky ends, one after the other, a drop of water like a pearl. These drops fell in the water now and then with a gentle splash. The effect of the scene was singular. Nothing more beautiful could be imagined; nothing more mournful could anywhere be found.

It was a wondrous palace, in which death sat smiling and content.

### XIII.

WHAT WAS SEEN THERE; AND WHAT PERCEIVED DIMLY.

A PLACE of shade, which yet dazzled the eyes—such was this surprising cavern.

The beating of the sea made itself felt throughout the cavern. The oscillation without raised and depressed the level of the waters within with the regularity of respiration. A mysterious spirit seemed to fill this great organism, as it swelled and subsided in silence.

The water had a magical transparency, and Gilliatt distinguished at various depths submerged recesses, and surfaces of jutting rocks ever of a deeper and a deeper green. Certain dark hollows, too, were there, probably too deep for soundings.

On each side of the submarine porch, rude elliptical arches, filled with shallows, indicated the position of small lateral caves, low alcoves of the central cavern, accessible, perhaps, at certain tides. These openings had roofs in the form of inclined planes, and at angles more or less acute. Little sandy beaches of a few feet wide, laid bare by the action of the water, stretched inward, and were lost in these recesses.

Here and there sea-weeds of more than a fathom in length undulated beneath the water, like the waving of long tresses in the wind; and there were glimpses of a forest of sea-plants.

Above and below the surface of the water, the wall of the cavern from top to bottom—from the vault down to the depth at which it became invisible—was tapestried with that prodigious efflorescence of the sea, rarely perceived by human eyes, which the old Spanish navigators called *praderias del mar*. A luxuriant moss, having all the tints of the olive, enlarged and concealed the protuberances of granite. From all the jutting points swung the thin fluted strips of varech, which sailors use as their barometers. The light breath which stirred in the cavern waved to and fro their glossy bands.

Under these vegetations there showed themselves from time to time some of the rarest *bijoux* of the casket of the ocean; ivory shells, strombi, purple-fish, univalves, struthiolaires, turriculated cerites. The bell-shaped limpet shells, like tiny huts, were everywhere adhering to the rocks, distributed in settlements, in the alleys between which prowled oscabrions, those beetles of the sea. A few large pebbles found their way into the cavern; shell-fish took refuge there. The crustacea are the grandeens of the sea, who, in their lacework and embroidery, avoid the rude contact of the pebbly crowd. The glittering heap of their shells, in certain spots under the wave, gave out singular irradiations, amidst which the eye caught glimpses of confused azure and gold, and mother-of-pearl, of every tint of the water.

Upon the side of the cavern, a little above the water-line, a magnificent and singular plant, attaching itself, like a fringe, to the border of sea-weed, continued and completed it. This plant, thick, fibrous, inextricably intertwined, and almost black, exhibited to the eye large confused and dusky festoons, everywhere dotted with innumerable little flowers of the colour of lapis-lazuli. In the water they seemed to glow like small blue flames. Out of the water they were flowers; beneath it they were sapphires. The water, rising and inundating the basement of the grotto clothed with these plants, seems to cover the rock with gems.

At every swelling of the wave these flowers increased in splendour, and at every subsidence

grew dull again. So is it with the destiny of man; aspiration is life, the outbreathing of the spirit is death.

One of the marvels of the cavern was the rock itself. This rock, forming here a wall, there an arch, and here again a pillar or pilaster, was in places rough and bare, and sometimes close beside was wrought with the most delicate natural carving. Strange evidences of mind mingled with the massive solidity of the granite. It was the wondrous art-work of the ocean. Here a sort of panel, cut square, and covered with round embossments in various positions, simulated a vague bas-relief. Before this sculpture, with its obscure designs, a man might have dreamed of Prometheus roughly sketching for Michael Angelo. It seemed as if that great genius with a few blows of his mallet could have finished the indistinct labours of the giant. In other places the rock was damasked like a Saracen buckler, or engraved like a Florentine vase. There were portions which appeared like Corinthian brass, then like arabesques, as on the door of a mosque; then like Runic stones with obscure and mystic prints of claws. Plants with twisted creepers and tendrils, crossing and recrossing upon the ground-work of golden lichens, covered it with filigree. The grotto resembled in some wise a Moorish palace. It was a union of barbarism and of goldsmith's work, with the imposing and rugged architecture of the elements.

The magnificent stains and moulderings of the sea covered, as with velvet, the angles of granite. The escarpments were festooned with large flowered bindweed, sustaining itself with graceful ease, and ornamenting the walls as by intelligent design. Wall-pellitories showed their strange clusters in tasteful arrangement. The wondrous light which came from beneath the water, at once a submarine twilight and an Elysian radiance, softened down and blended all harsh lineaments. Every wave was a prism. The outlines of things under these rainbow-tinted undulations produced the chromatic effects of optical glasses made too convex. Solar spectra shot through the waters. Fragments of rainbows seemed floating in that transparent dawn. Elsewhere—in other corners—there was discernible a kind of moonlight in the water. Every kind of splendour seemed to mingle there, forming a singular sort of twilight. Nothing could be more perplexing or enigmatical than the sumptuous beauties of this cavern. Enchantment reigned over all. The fantastic vegetation, the rude masonry of the place seemed to harmonize.

Was it daylight which entered by this casement beneath the sea? Was it indeed water which trembled in this dusky pool? Were not these arched roofs and porches fashioned out of sunset clouds to imitate a cavern to-men's eyes? What stone was that beneath the feet? Was not this solid shaft about to melt and pass into thin air? What was that cunning jewellery of glittering shells, half seen beneath the

wave? How far away were life, and the green earth, and human faces? What strange enchantment haunted that mystic twilight? What blind emotion, mingling its sympathies with the uneasy restlessness of plants beneath the wave?

At the extremity of the cavern, which was oblong, rose a Cyclopean archivolte, singularly exact in form. It was a species of cave within a cave, of tabernacle within a sanctuary. Here, behind a sheet of bright verdure, interposed like the veil of a temple, arose a stone out of the waves, having square sides, and bearing some resemblance to an altar. The water surrounded it in all parts. It seemed as if a goddess had just descended from it. One might have dreamed there that some celestial form beneath that crypt or upon that altar dwelt for ever pensive in naked beauty, but grew invisible at the approach of mortals. It was hard to conceive that majestic chamber without a vision within. The day-dream of the intruder might evoke again the marvellous apparition. A flood of chaste light falling upon white shoulders scarcely seen; a forehead bathed with the light of dawn; an Olympian visage oval-shaped; a bust full of mysterious grace; arms modestly down-dropt; tresses unloosened in the aurora; a body delicately modelled of pure whiteness, half wrapped in a sacred cloud, with the glance of a virgin; a Venus rising from the sea, or Eve issuing from chaos; such was the dream which filled the mind.

The beauty of the recess seemed made for this celestial presence. It was for the sake of this deity, this fairy of the pearl caverns, this queen of the Zephyrs, this grace born of the waves, it was for her—as the mind, at least, imagined—that this subterranean dwelling had been thus religiously walled in, so that nothing might ever trouble the reverend shadows and the majestic silence round about that divine spirit.

Gilliat, who was a kind of seer amid the secrets of Nature, stood there musing and sensible of confused emotions.

Suddenly, at a few feet below him, in the delightful transparence of that water like liquid jewels, he became sensible of the approach of something of mystic shape. A species of long ragged band was moving amidst the oscillation of the waves. It did not float, but darted about of its own will. It had an object; was advancing somewhere rapidly. The object had something of the form of a jester's bawble with points, which hung flabby and undulating. It seemed covered with a dust incapable of being washed away by the water. It was more than horrible; it was foul. The beholder felt that it was something monstrous. It was a living thing; unless, indeed, it were but an illusion. It seemed to be seeking the darker portion of the cavern, where at last it vanished. The heavy shadows grew darker as its sinister form glided into them and disappeared.



## BOOK II.

### THE LABOUR.

#### I.

##### THE RESOURCES OF ONE WHO HAS NOTHING.

THE cavern did not easily part with its explorers. The entry had been difficult; going back was more difficult still. Gilliatt, however, succeeded in extricating himself; but he did not return there. He had found nothing of what he was in quest of, and he had not the time to indulge curiosity.

He put the forge in operation at once. Tools were wanting; he set to work and made them.

For fuel he had the wreck; for motive force, the water; for his bellows, the wind; for his anvil, a stone; for art, his instinct; for power, his will.

Gilliatt entered with ardour upon his sombre labours.

The weather seemed to smile upon his work. It continued to be dry and free from equinoctial gales. The month of March had come, but it was tranquil. The days grew longer. The blue of the sky, the gentleness of all the movements of the scene, the serenity of the noontide, seemed to exclude the idea of mischief. The waves danced merrily in the sunlight. A Judas kiss is the first step to treachery; of such caresses the ocean is prodigal. Her smile, like that of woman's sometimes, cannot be trusted.

There was little wind. The hydraulic bellows worked all the better for that reason. Much wind would have embarrassed rather than aided it. Gilliatt had a saw; he manufactured for himself a file. With the saw he attacked the wood; with the file, the metal. Then he availed himself of the two iron hands of the smith—the pincers and the pliers. The pincers gripe, the pliers handle; the one is like the closed hand, the other like the fingers. By degrees he made for himself a number of auxiliaries, and constructed his armour. With a piece of hoop-wood he made a screen for his forge fire.

One of his principal labours was the sorting and repair of pulleys. He mended both the blocks and the sheaves of tackle. He cut down the irregularities of all broken joists, and reshaped the extremities. He had, as we have said, for the necessities of his carpentry, a quantity of pieces of wood, stored away, and arranged according to the forms, the dimensions, and the nature of their grain; the oak on one side, the pine on the other; the short pieces like riders separated from the straight pieces like binding strakes. This formed his reserve of supports and levers, of which he might stand in great need at any moment.

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Any one who intends to construct hoisting tackle ought to provide himself with beams and small cables. But that is not sufficient. He must have cordage. Gilliatt restored the cables, large and small. He frayed out the tattered sails, and succeeded in converting them into an excellent yarn, of which he made twine. With this he joined the cordage. The joins, however, were liable to rot. It was necessary, therefore, to hasten to make use of these cables. He had only been able to make white tow, for he was without tar.

The ropes mended, he proceeded to repair the chains.

Thanks to the lateral point of the stone anvil, which served the part of the bicorn conoid, he was able to forge rings, rude in shape, but strong. With these he fastened together the severed lengths of chains, and made long pieces.

To work at a forge without assistance is something more than troublesome. He succeeded nevertheless. It is true that he had only to forge and shape articles of comparatively small size, which he was able to handle with the pliers in one hand, while he hammered with the other.

He cut the iron bars of the captain's bridge, on which he used to pass to and fro from paddle-box to paddle-box giving his orders, into lengths; forged at one extremity of each piece a point, and at the other a flat head. By this means he manufactured large nails of about a foot in length. These nails, much used in pontoon making, are useful in fixing anything in rocks.

What was his object in all these labours? We shall see.

He was several times compelled to renew the blade of his hatchet and the teeth of his saw. For renotching the saw he had manufactured a special file.

Occasionally he made use of the capstan of the *Durande*. The hook of the chain broke: he made another.

By the aid of his pliers and pincers, and by using his chisel as a screw-driver, he set to work to remove the two paddle-wheels of the vessel; an object which he accomplished. This was rendered practicable by reason of a peculiarity in their construction. The paddle-boxes which covered them served him to stow them away. With the planks of these paddle-boxes he made two cases, in which he deposited the two paddles, piece by piece, each part being carefully numbered.

His piece of chalk became precious for this purpose.

He kept the two cases upon the strongest part of the wreck.

When these preliminaries were completed, Gilliatt found himself face to face with the great difficulty. The problem of the engine of the *Durande* was now clearly before him.

Taking the paddle-wheels to pieces had proved practicable. It was very different with the machinery.

In the first place, he was almost entirely ignorant of the details of the mechanism. Working thus blindly he might do some irreparable damage. Then, even in attempting to dismember it, if he had ventured on that course, far other tools would be necessary than such as he could fabricate with a cavern for a forge, a wind-draught for bellows, and a stone for an anvil. In attempting, therefore, to take to pieces the machinery, there was the risk of destroying it.

The attempt seemed at first sight wholly impracticable.

The apparent impossibility of the project rose before him like a stone wall, blocking further progress.

What was to be done ?

## II.

### PREPARATIONS.

GILLIATT had a notion.

Since the time of the carpenter-mason of Salbris, who, in the sixteenth century, in the dark ages of science—long before Amontons had discovered the first law of electricity, or Lahire the second, or Coulomb the third—without other helper than a child, his son, with ill-fashioned tools, in the chamber of the great clock of La Charité-sur-Loire, resolved at one stroke five or six problems in statics and dynamics inextricably interwoven like the wheels in a block of carts and wagons—since the time of the grand and marvellous achievement of the poor workman, who found means, without breaking a single piece of wire, without throwing one of the teeth of the wheels out of gear, to lower in one piece, by a marvellous simplification, from the second story of the clock tower to the first, that massive monitor of the hours, made all of iron and brass, “large as the room in which the man watches at night from the tower,” with its motion, its cylinders, its barrels, its drum, its hooks, and its weights, the barrel of its spring steel-yard, its horizontal pendulum, the hold-fasts of its escapement, its reels of large and small chains, its stone weights, one of which weighed five hundred pounds, its bells, its peals, its jacks that strike the hours—since the days, I say, of the man who accomplished this miracle, and of whom posterity knows not even the name—nothing that could be compared with the project which Gilliatt was meditating had ever been attempted.

The ponderousness, the delicacy, the involvement of the difficulties were not less in the machinery of the *Durande* than in the clock of La Charité-sur-Loire.

The untaught mechanic had his helpmate—his son ; Gilliatt was alone.

A crowd gathered together from Meung-sur-Loire, from Nevers, and even from Orleans, able at time of need to assist the mason of Salbris, and to encourage him with their friendly voices. Gilliatt had around him no voices but those of the wind ; no crowd but the assemblage of waves.

There is nothing more remarkable than the timidity of ignorance, unless it be its temerity. When ignorance becomes daring, she has sometimes a sort of compass within herself—the intuition of the truth, clearer oftentimes in a simple mind than in a learned brain.

Ignorance invites to an attempt. It is a state of wonderment, which, with its concomitant curiosity, forms a power. Knowledge often enough disconcerts and makes overcautious. Gama, had he known what lay before him, would have recoiled before the Cape of Storms. If Columbus had been a great geographer, he might have failed to discover America.

The second successful climber of Mont Blanc was the savant, Saussure ; the first the goat-herd, Balmat.

These instances, I admit, are exceptions, which detract nothing from science, which remains the rule. The ignorant man may discover ; it is the learned who invent.

The sloop was still at anchor in the creek of “The Man” rock, where the sea left it in peace. Gilliatt, as will be remembered, had arranged everything for maintaining constant communication with it. He visited the sloop and measured her beam carefully in several parts, but particularly her midship frame. Then he returned to the *Durande* and measured the diameter of the floor of the engine-room. This diameter, of course, without the paddles, was two feet less than the broadest part of the deck of his bark. The machinery therefore might be put aboard the sloop.

But how could it be got there ?

## III.

### GILLIATT'S MASTERPIECE COMES TO THE RESCUE OF LETHIERRY.

ANY fisherman who had been mad enough to loiter in that season in the neighbourhood of Gilliatt's labours about this time would have been repaid for his hardihood by a singular sight between the two Douvres.

Before his eyes would have appeared four stout beams, at equal distances, stretching from one Douvre to the other, and apparently forced into the rock, which is the firmest of all holds. On the Little Douvre, their extremities were laid and buttressed upon the projections of rock. On the Great Douvre, they had been driven in by blows of a hammer, by the powerful hand of some workman standing upright upon the



beam itself. These supports were a little longer than the distance between the rocks. Hence the firmness of their hold; and hence, also, their slanting position. They touched the Great Douvre at an acute, and the Little Douvre at an obtuse angle. Their inclination was only slight; but it was unequal, which was a defect. But for this defect, they might have been supposed to be prepared to receive the planking of a deck. To these four beams were attached four sets of hoisting apparatus, each having its pendent and its tackle-fall, with the bold peculiarity of having the tackle-blocks with two sheaves at one extremity of the beam, and the simple pulleys at the opposite end. This distance, which was too great not to be perilous, was necessitated by the operations to be effected. The blocks were firm and the pulleys strong. To this tackle-gear cables were attached, which from a distance looked like threads; while beneath this apparatus of tackle and carpentry, in the air, the massive hull of the *Durande* seemed suspended by threads.

She was not yet suspended, however. Under the cross-beams, eight perpendicular holes had been made in the deck, four on the port, and four on the starboard side of the engine; eight other holes had been made beneath them through the keel. The cables, descending vertically from the four tackle-blocks, through the deck, passed out at the keel, and under the machinery, re-entered the ship by the holes on the other side, and passing again upward through the deck, returned, and were wound round the beams at a spot where a sort of jigger-tackle held them in a bunch bound fast to a single cable, capable of being directed by one arm. The single cable passed over a hook, and through a dead-eye, which completed the apparatus, and kept it in check. This combination compelled the four tacklings to work together, and, acting as a complete restraint upon the suspending powers, became a sort of dynamical rudder in the hand of the pilot of the operation, maintaining the movements in equilibrium. The ingenious adjustment of this system of tackling had some of the simplifying qualities of the Weston pulley of these times, with a mixture of the antique polystaston of Vitruvius. Gilliatt had discovered this, although he knew nothing of the dead Vitruvius or of the still unborn Weston. The length of the cables varied, according to the unequal declivity of the cross-beams. The ropes were dangerous, for the untarred hemp was liable to give way. Chains would have been better in this respect, but chains would not have passed well through the tackle-blocks.

The apparatus was full of defects; but as the work of one man, it was surprising. For the rest, the reader will understand that many details are omitted which would render the construction intelligible to practical mechanics, but obscure to others.

The top of the funnel passed between the two beams in the middle.

Gilliatt, without suspecting it, had recon-

structed, three centuries later, the mechanism of the *Salbris* carpenter, a mechanism rude and incorrect, and hazardous for him who would dare to use it.

Here let us remark that the rudest defects do not prevent a mechanism from working well or ill. It may limp, but it moves. The obelisk in the square of St. Peter's at Rome is erected in a way which offends against all the principles of statics. The carriage of the *Czar Peter* was so constructed that it appeared about to overturn at every step, but it travelled onward for all that. What deformities are there in the machinery of Marly! Everything that is heterodox in hydraulics. Yet it did not supply Louis XIV. the less with water.

Come what might, Gilliatt had faith. He had even anticipated success so confidently as to fix in the bulwarks of the sloop, on the day when he measured its proportions, two pairs of corresponding iron rings on each side, exactly at the same distances as the four rings on board the *Durande*, to which were attached the four chains of the funnel.

He had in his mind a very complete and settled plan. All the chances being against him, he had evidently determined that all the precautions at least should be on his side.

He did some things which seemed useless; a sign of attentive premeditation.

His manner of proceeding would, as we have said, have puzzled an observer, even though familiar with mechanical operations.

A witness of his labour who had seen him, for example, with enormous efforts, and at the risk of breaking his neck, driving with blows of his hammer eight or ten great nails which he had forged into the base of the two Douvres at the entrance of the defile between them, would have had some difficulty in understanding the objects of these nails, and would probably have wondered what could be the use of all that trouble.

If he had then seen Gilliatt measuring the portion of the fore bulwark which had remained, as we have described it, hanging on by the wreck, then attaching a strong cable to the upper edge of that portion, cutting away with strokes of his hatchet the dislocated fastenings which held it, then dragging it out of the defile, pushing the lower part by the aid of the receding tide, while he dragged the upper part; finally, by great labour, fastening with the cable this heavy mass of planks and piles, wider than the entrance of the defile itself, with the nails driven into the base of the Little Douvre, the observer would perhaps have found it still more difficult to comprehend, and might have wondered why Gilliatt, if he wanted, for the purpose of his operations, to disencumber the space between the two rocks of this mass, had not allowed it to fall into the sea, where the tide would have carried it away.

Gilliatt had probably his reasons.

In fixing the nails in the basement of the rocks, he had taken advantage of all the cracks

in the granite, enlarged them where needful, and driven in first of all wedges of wood, in which he fixed the nails. He made a rough commencement of similar preparations in the two rocks which rose at the other extremity of the narrow passage on the eastern side. He furnished with plugs of wood all the crevices, as if he desired to keep these also ready to hold nails or clamps; but this appeared to be a simple precaution, for he did not use them further. He was compelled to economize, and only to use his materials as he had need, and at the moment when the necessity for them came. This was another addition to his numerous difficulties.

As fast as one labour was accomplished another became necessary. Gilliatt passed without hesitation from task to task, and resolutely accomplished his giant strides.

#### IV.

##### SUB RE.

THE aspect of the man who accomplished all these labors became terrible.

Gilliatt in his multifarious tasks expended all his strength at once, and regained it with difficulty.

Privations on the one hand, lassitude on the other, had much reduced him. His hair and beard had grown long. He had but one shirt which was not in rags. He went about naked-footed, the wind having carried away one of his shoes and the sea the other. Fractures of the rude and dangerous stone anvil which he used had left small wounds upon his hands and arms, the marks of labour. These wounds, or rather scratches, were superficial, but the keen air and the salt sea irritated them continually.

He was generally hungry, thirsty, and cold.

His store of fresh water was gone; his rye-meal was used or eaten. He had nothing left but a little biscuit.

This he broke with his teeth, having no water in which to steep it.

By little and little, and day by day, his powers decreased.

The terrible rocks were consuming his existence.

How to get food was a problem; how to get drink was a problem; how to get rest was a problem.

He ate when he was fortunate enough to find a cray-fish or a crab; he drank when he chanced to see a sea-bird descend upon a point of rock; for on climbing up to the spot he generally found there a hollow with a little fresh water. He drank from it after the bird, sometimes with the bird, for the gulls and sea-mews had become accustomed to him, and no longer flew away at his approach. Even in his greatest need of food he did not attempt to molest them. He had, as will be remembered, a superstition about birds. The birds on their part, now that his

hair was rough and wild and his beard long, had no fear of him. The change in his face gave them confidence; he had lost resemblance to men, and taken the form of the wild beast.

The birds and Gilliatt, in fact, had become good friends. Companions in poverty, they helped each other. As long as he had had any meal, he had crumbled for them some little bits of the cakes he made. In his deeper distress, they showed him in their turn the places where he might find the little pools of water.

He ate the shell-fish raw. Shell-fish help in a certain degree to quench the thirst. The crabs he cooked. Having no kettle, he roasted them between two stones made red-hot in his fire, after the manner of the savages of the Farö Islands.

Meanwhile signs of the equinoctial season had begun to appear. There came rain—an angry rain. No showers or steady torrents, but fine, sharp, icy, penetrating points, which pierced to his skin through his clothing, and to his bones through his skin. It was a rain which yielded little water for drinking, but which drenched him none the less.

Chary of assistance, prodigal of misery—such was the character of these rains. During one week Gilliatt suffered from them all day and all night.

At night, in his rocky recess, nothing but the overpowering fatigue of his daily work enabled him to get sleep. The great sea-gnats stung him, and he awakened covered with blisters.

He had a kind of low fever, which sustained him; this fever is a succour which destroys. By instinct he chewed the mosses, or sucked the leaves of wild cochlearia, scanty tufts of which grew in the dry crevices of the rocks. Of his suffering, however, he took little heed. He had no time to spare from his work to the consideration of his own privations. The rescue of the machinery of the Durande was progressing well. That sufficed for him.

Every now and then, for the necessities of his work, he jumped into the water, swam to some point, and gained a footing again. He simply plunged into the sea and left it, as a man passes from one room in his dwelling to another.

His clothing was never dry. It was saturated with rain-water, which had no time to dry, and with sea-water, which never dries. He lived perpetually wet.

Living in wet clothing is a habit which may be acquired. The poor groups of Irish people, old men, mothers, girls almost naked, and infants, who pass the winter in the open air, under the snow and rain, huddled together, sometimes at the corners of houses in the streets of London, live and die in this condition.

To be soaked with wet, and yet to be thirsty—Gilliatt grew familiar with this strange torture. There were times when he was glad to suck the sleeve of his loose coat.

The fire which he made scarcely warmed him. A fire in open air yields little comfort. One burns on one side and freezes on the other.



Gilliat often, sometimes, shivered even while sweating over his forge.

Everywhere about him rose resistance amidst a sort of terrible silence. He felt himself the enemy of an unseen combination. There is a dismal *non possumus* in nature. The inertia of matter is like a sullen threat. A mysterious persecution environed him. He suffered from heats and shiverings. The fire ate into his flesh; the water froze him; feverish thirst tormented him; the wind tore his clothing; hunger undermined the organs of the body. The oppression of all these things was constantly exhausting him. Obstacles silent, immense, seemed to converge from all points, with the blind irresponsibility of fate, yet full of a savage unanimity. He felt them pressing inexorably upon him. No means were there of escaping from them. His sufferings produced the impression of some living persecutor. He had a constant sense of something working against him, of a hostile form ever present, ever labouring to circumvent and to subdue him. He could have fled from the struggle; but since he remained, he had no choice but to war with this impenetrable hostility. He asked himself what this was. It took hold of him, grasped him tightly, overpowered him, deprived him of breath. The invisible persecutor was destroying him by slow degrees. Every day the oppression became greater, as if a mysterious screw had received another turn.

His situation in this dreadful spot resembled a duel, in which a suspicion of some treachery haunts the mind of one of the combatants.

Now it seemed a coalition of obscure forces surrounded him. He felt that there was somewhere a determination to be rid of his presence. It is thus that the glacier chases the loitering ice-block.

Almost without seeming to touch him, this latent condition had reduced him to rags; had left him bleeding, distressed, and as it were, *hors de combat*, even before the battle. He laboured, indeed, not the less—without pause or rest; but as the work advanced, the workman himself lost ground. It might have been fancied that Nature, dreading his bold spirit, adopted the plan of slowly undermining his bodily power. Gilliat kept his ground, and left the rest to the future. The sea had begun by consuming him; what would come next?

The double Douvres—that dragon made of granite, and lying in ambush in mid-ocean—had sheltered him. It had allowed him to enter, and to do his will; but its hospitality resembled the welcome of devouring jaws.

The desert, the boundless surface, the unfathomable space around him and above, so full of negatives to man's will; the mute, inexorable determination of phenomena following their appointed course; the grand general law of things, implacable and passive; the ebbs and flows; the rocks themselves, dark Pleiades whose points were each a star amid vortices, a centre of an irradiation of currents; the strange, indefinable

conspiracy to stifle with indifference the temerity of a living being; the wintry winds, the clouds, and the beleaguering waves enveloped him, closed round him slowly, and in a measure shut him in, and separated him from companionship, like a dungeon built up by degrees round a living man. All against him; nothing for him; he felt himself isolated, abandoned, enfeebled, sapped, forgotten. His storehouse empty, his tools broken or defective; he was tormented with hunger and thirst by day, with cold by night. His sufferings had left him with wounds and tatters, rags covering sores, torn hands, bleeding feet, wasted limbs, pallid cheeks, and eyes bright with a strange light; but this was the steady flame of his determination.

All his efforts seemed to tend to the impossible. His success was trifling and slow. He was compelled to expend much labour for very little results. This it was that gave to his struggle its noble and pathetic character.

That it should have required so many preparations, so much toil, so many cautious experiments, such nights of hardship, and such days of danger, merely to set up four beams over a shipwrecked vessel, to divide and isolate the portion that could be saved, and to adjust to that wreck within a wreck four tackle-blocks with their cables, was only the result of his solitary labour.

That solitary position Gilliat had more than accepted; he had deliberately chosen it. Dreading a competitor, because a competitor might have proved a rival, he had sought for no assistance. The overwhelming enterprise, the risk, the danger, the toil multiplied by itself, the possible destruction of the salvor in his work, famine, fever, nakedness, distress—he had chosen all these for himself! Such was his selfishness. He was like a man placed in some terrible chamber which is being slowly exhausted of air. His vitality was leaving him by little and little. He scarcely perceived it.

Exhaustion of the bodily strength does not necessarily exhaust the will. Faith is only a secondary power; the will is the first. The mountains, which faith is proverbially said to move, are nothing beside that which the will can accomplish. All that Gilliat lost in vigour he gained in tenacity. The destruction of the physical man under the oppressive influence of that wild surrounding sea, and rock, and sky, seemed only to reinvigorate his moral nature.

Gilliat felt no fatigue; or, rather, would not yield to any. The refusal of the mind to recognise the failings of the body is in itself an immense power.

He saw nothing except the steps which were making in the progress of his labours.

His object—now seeming so near attainment—wrapped him in perpetual illusions.

He endured all this suffering without any other thought than is comprised in the word "Forward." His work flew to his head; the strength of the will is intoxicating. Its intoxication is called heroism.

He had become a kind of Job, having the ocean for the scene of his sufferings. But he was a Job wrestling with difficulty; a Job combating and making head against afflictions; a Job conquering; a combination of Job and Prometheus, if such names are not too great to be applied to a poor sailor and fisher of crabs and cray-fish.

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## V.

### SUB UMBRA.

SOMETIMES in the night-time Gilliatt woke and peered into the darkness.

He felt a strange emotion.

His eyes were opened upon the black night; the situation was dismal—full of disquietude.

There is such a thing as the pressure of darkness.

A strange roof of shadow; a deep obscurity which no diver can explore; a light mingled with that obscurity, of a strange, subdued, and sombre kind; floating atoms of rays, like a dust of seeds or of ashes; millions of lamps, but no illumining; a vast sprinkling of fire, of which no man knows the secret; a diffusion of shining points, like a drift of sparks arrested in their course; the disorder of the whirlwind, with the fixedness of death; a mysterious and abyssmal depth; an enigma, at once showing and concealing its face; the infinite in its mask of darkness—these are the synonyms of night. Its weight lies heavily on the soul of man.

This union of all mysteries—the mystery of the Cosmos and the mystery of Fate—oppresses human reason.

The pressure of darkness acts in inverse proportion upon different kinds of natures. In the presence of night man feels his own incompleteness. He perceives the dark void and is sensible of infirmity. It is like the vacancy of blindness. Face to face with night, man bends, kneels, prostrates himself, crouches on the earth, crawls towards a cave, or seeks for wings. Almost always he shrinks from that vague presence of the Infinite Unknown. He asks himself what it is; he trembles and bows the head. Sometimes he desires to go to it.

To go whither?

He can only answer “Yonder.”

But what is that? and what is there?

This curiosity is evidently forbidden to the spirit of man, for all around him the roads which bridge that gulf are broken up or gone. No arch exists for him to span the Infinite. But there is attraction in forbidden knowledge, as in the edge of the abyss. Where the footstep cannot tread, the eye may reach; where the eye can penetrate no further, the mind may soar. There is no man, however feeble or insufficient his resources, who does not essay. According to his nature, he questions or recoils before that mystery. With some it has the effect of repressing; with others it enlarges the soul. The spectacle is sombre, indefinite.

Is the night calm and cloudless? It is then a depth of shadow. Is it stormy? It is then a sea of cloud. Its limitless deeps reveal themselves to us, and yet baffle our gaze; close themselves against research, but open to conjecture. Its innumerable dots of light only make deeper the obscurity beyond. Jewels, scintillations, stars; existences revealed in the unknown universes; dread defiances to man's approach; landmarks of the infinite creation; boundaries there, where there are no bounds; sea-marks impossible, and yet real, numbering the fathoms of those infinite deeps. One microscopic glittering point; then another; then another; imperceptible, yet enormous. Yonder light is a focus; that focus is a star; that star is a sun; that sun is a universe; that universe is nothing; for all numbers are as zero in the presence of the Infinite.

These worlds, which yet are nothing, exist. Through this fact we feel the difference which separates the *being nothing* from the *not to be*.

All these vague imaginings, increased and intensified by solitude, weighed upon Gilliatt.

He understood them little, but he felt them.

His was a powerful intellect clouded; a great spirit wild and untaught.

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## VI.

### GILLIATT PLACES THE SLOOP IN READINESS.

THIS rescue of the machinery of the wreck as meditated by Gilliatt was, as we have already said, like the escape of a criminal from a prison—necessitating all the patience and industry recorded of such achievements; industry carried to the point of a miracle, patience only to be compared with long agony. A certain prisoner named Thomas, at the Mont Saint Michel, found means of secreting the greater part of a wall in his paliasse. Another at Tulle, in 1820, cut away a quantity of lead from the terrace where the prisoners walked for exercise. With what kind of knife? No one would guess. And melted this lead with what fire? None have ever discovered; but it is known that he cast it in a mould made of the crumb of bread. With this lead and this mould he made a key, and with this key succeeded in opening a lock of which he had never seen anything but the keyhole. Some of this marvellous ingenuity Gilliatt possessed. He had once climbed and descended from the cliff at Boissrose. He was the Baron Trenck of the wreck, and the Latude of her machinery.

The sea, like a jailer, kept watch over him.

For the rest, mischievous and inclement as the rain had been, he had contrived to derive some benefit from it. He had in part replenished his stock of fresh water; but his thirst was inextinguishable, and he emptied his can as fast as he filled it.

One day—it was on the last day of April or the first of May—all was at length ready for his purpose.



The engine-room was as it were enclosed between the eight cables hanging from the tackle-blocks, four on one side, four on the other. The sixteen holes upon the deck and under the keel, through which the cables passed, had been hooped round by sawing. The planking had been sawed, the timber cut with the hatchet, the ironwork with a file, the sheathing with the chisel. The part of the keel immediately under the machinery was cut squarewise, and ready to descend with it while still supporting it. All this frightful swinging mass was held only by one chain, which was itself only kept in position by a filed notch. At this stage, in such a labour and so near its completion, haste is prudence.

The water was low; the moment favourable. Gilliatt had succeeded in removing the axle of the paddles, the extremities of which might have proved an obstacle and checked the descent. He had contrived to make this heavy portion fast in a vertical position within the engine-room itself.

It was time to bring his work to an end. The workman, as we have said, was not weary, for his will was strong, but his tools were. The forge was by degrees becoming impracticable. The blower had begun to work badly. The little hydraulic fall being of sea-water, saline deposits had encrusted the joints of the apparatus, and prevented its free action.

Gilliatt visited the creek of "The Man" rock, examined the sloop, and assured himself that all was in good condition, particularly the four rings fixed to starboard and to larboard; then he weighed anchor, and worked the heavy, barge-shaped craft with the oars till he brought it alongside the two *Douvres*. The defile between the rocks was wide enough to admit it. There was also depth enough. On the day of his arrival he had satisfied himself that it was possible to push the sloop under the *Durande*.

The feat, however, was difficult; it required the minute precision of a watchmaker. The operation was all the more delicate, from the fact that, for his objects, he was compelled to force it in by the stern, rudder first. It was necessary that the mast and the rigging of the sloop should project beyond the wreck in the direction of the sea.

These embarrassments rendered all Gilliatt's operations awkward. It was not like entering the creek of "The Man," where it was a mere affair of the tiller. It was necessary here to push, drag, row, and take soundings all together. Gilliatt consumed but a quarter of an hour in these manœuvres, but he was successful.

In fifteen or twenty minutes the sloop was adjusted under the wreck. It was almost wedged in there. By means of his two anchors he moored the boat by head and stern. The strongest of the two was placed so as to be efficient against the strongest wind that blows, which was that from the south-west. Then, by the aid of a lever and the capstan, he lowered into the sloop the two cases containing the pieces of the pad-

dle-wheels, the slings of which were all ready. The two cases served as ballast.

Relieved of these encumbrances, he fastened to the hook of the chain of the capstan the sling of the regulating tackle-gear, intending to check the pulleys.

Owing to the peculiar objects of this labour, the defects of the old sloop became useful qualities. It had no deck; her burden, therefore, would have greater depth, and could rest upon the hold. Her mast was very forward—too far forward, indeed, for general purposes; her contents, therefore, would have more room; and the mast standing thus beyond the mass of the wreck, there would be nothing to hinder its disembarkation. It was a mere shell or case for receiving it; but nothing is more stable than this on the sea.

While engaged in these operations, Gilliatt suddenly perceived that the sea was rising. He looked around to see from what quarter the wind was coming.

## VII.

### SUDDEN DANGER.

THE breeze was scarcely perceptible, but what there was came from the west—a disagreeable habit of the winds during the equinoxes.

The rising sea varies much in its effects upon the *Douvres* rocks, depending upon the quarter of the wind.

According to the gale which drives them before it, the waves enter the rocky corridor either from the east or from the west. Entering from the east, the sea is comparatively gentle; coming from the west, it is always furious. The reason of this is, that the wind from the east, blowing from the land, has not had time to gather force; while the westerly winds, coming from the Atlantic, blow unchecked from a vast ocean. Even a very slight breeze, if it comes from the west, is serious. It rolls the huge billows from the illimitable space, and dashes the waves against the narrow defile in greater bulk than can find entrance there.

A sea which rolls into a gulf is always terrible. It is the same with a crowd of people; a multitude is a sort of fluid body. When the quantity which can enter is less than the quantity endeavouring to force a way, there is a fatal crush among the crowd, a fierce convulsion on the water. As long as the west wind blows, however slight the breeze, the *Douvres* are twice a day subjected to that rude assault. The sea rises, the tide breasts up, the narrow gullet gives little entrance; the waves, driven against it violently, rebound and roar, and a tremendous surf beats the two sides of the gorge. Thus the *Douvres*, during the slightest wind from the west, present the singular spectacle of a sea comparatively calm without, while within the rocks a storm is raging. This tumult of waters, altogether confined and circumscribed,

has nothing of the character of a tempest. It is a mere local outbreak among the waves, but a terrible one. As regards the winds from the north and south, they strike the rocks crosswise, and cause little surf in the passage. The entrance by the east, a fact which must be borne in mind, was close to "The Man" rock. The redoubtable opening to the west was at the opposite extremity, exactly between the two Douvres.

It was at this western entrance that Gilliatt found himself with the wrecked *Durande*, and the sloop made fast beneath it.

A catastrophe seemed inevitable. There was not much wind, but it was sufficient for the impending mischief.

Before many hours, the swell which was rising would be rushing with full force into the gorge of the Douvres. The first waves were already breaking. This swell and eddy of the entire Atlantic would have behind it the immense sea. There would be no squall, no violence; but a simple overwhelming wave, which, commencing on the coasts of America, rolls towards the shores of Europe with an impetus gathered over two thousand leagues. This wave, a gigantic ocean barrier, meeting the gap of the rocks, must be caught between the two Douvres, standing like watch-towers at the entrance, or like pillars of the defile. Thus swelled by the tide, augmented by resistance, driven back by the shoals, and urged on by the wind, it would strike the rock with violence; and with all the contortions from the obstacles it had encountered, and all the frenzy of a sea confined in limits, would rush between the rocky walls, where it would reach the sloop and the *Durande*, and, in all probability, destroy them.

A shield against this danger was wanting. Gilliatt had one.

The problem was to prevent the sea reaching it at one bound; to obstruct it from striking, while allowing it to rise; to bar the passage without refusing it admission; to prevent the compression of the water in the gorge, which was the whole danger; to turn an eruption into a simple flood; to extract, as it were, from the waves all their violence, and constrain the furies to be gentle; it was, in fact, to substitute an obstacle which will appease for an obstacle which irritates.

Gilliatt, with all that dexterity which he possessed, and which is so much more efficient than mere force, sprang upon the rocks like a chamois among the mountains or a monkey in the forest, using for his tottering and dizzy strides the smallest projecting stone; leaping into the water, and issuing from it again; swimming among the shoals and clambering the rocks, with a rope between his teeth and a mallet in his hand. Thus he detached the cable which kept suspended and also fast to the basement of the Little Douvre the end of the forward bulwark of the *Durande*; fashioned out of some ends of hawsers a sort of hinges, holding this bulwark to the huge nails fixed in the

granite; swung this apparatus of planks upon them, like the gates of a great dock, and turned their sides, as he would turn a rudder, outward to the waves, which pushed the extremities upon the Great Douvre, while the rope hinges detained the other extremities upon the Little Douvre; next he contrived, by means of the huge nails fixed beforehand for the purpose, to fix the same kind of fastenings upon the Great Douvre as on the little one; made completely fast the vast mass of wood-work against the two pillars of the gorge, slung a chain across this barrier, like a baldric upon a cuirass, and, in less than an hour, this barricade against the sea was complete, and the gullet of the rocks closed as by a folding door.

This powerful apparatus, a heavy mass of beams and planks, which laid flat would have made a raft, and upright formed a wall, had by the aid of the water been handled by Gilliatt with the adroitness of a juggler. It might almost have been said that the obstruction was complete before the rising sea had the time to perceive it.

It was one of those occasions on which Jean Bart would have employed the famous expression which he applied to the sea every time he narrowly escaped shipwreck, "We have cheated the Englishman;" for it is well known that when that famous admiral meant to speak contemptuously of the ocean he called it "the Englishman."

The entrance to the defile being thus protected, Gilliatt thought of the sloop. He loosened sufficient cable for the two anchors to allow her to rise with the tide, an operation similar to what the mariners of old called "*mouiller avec des embossures*." In all this, Gilliatt was not taken the least by surprise; the necessity had been foreseen. A seaman would have perceived it by the two pulleys of the top ropes cut in the form of snatch-blocks, and fixed behind the sloop, through which passed two ropes, the ends of which were slung through the rings of the anchors.

Meanwhile the tide was rising fast; the half flood had arrived, a moment when the shock of the waves, even in comparatively moderate weather, may become considerable. Exactly what Gilliatt expected came to pass. The waves rolled violently against the barrier, struck it, broke heavily, and passed beneath. Outside was the heavy swell; within, the waters ran quietly. He had devised a sort of marine *Furca caudina*. The sea was conquered.

## VIII.

### MOVEMENT RATHER THAN PROGRESS.

THE moment so long dreaded had come.

The problem now was to place the machinery in the bark.

Gilliatt remained thoughtful for some moments, holding the elbow of his left arm in his



right hand, and applying his left hand to his forehead.

Then he climbed upon the wreck, one part of which, containing the engine, was to be parted from it, while the other remained.

He severed the four slings which fixed the four chains from the funnel on the larboard and the starboard sides. The slings being only of cord, his knife served him well enough for this purpose.

The four chains, set free, hung down along the sides of the funnel.

From the wreck he climbed up to the apparatus which he had constructed, stamped with his feet upon the beams, inspected the tackle-blocks, looked to the pulleys, handled the cables, examined the eking-pieces, assured himself that the untarred hemp was not saturated through, found that nothing was wanting and nothing giving way; then, springing from the height of the suspending props on to the deck, he took up his position near the capstan, in the part of the *Durande* which he intended to leave jammed in between the two *Douvres*. This was to be his post during his labours.

Earnest, but troubled with no impulses but what were useful to his work, he took a final glance at the hoisting-tackle, then took a file and began to saw with it through the chain which held the whole suspended.

The rasping of the file was audible amidst the roaring of the sea.

The chain from the capstan, attached to the regulating gear, was within his reach—quite near his hand.

Suddenly there was a crash. The link which he was filing snapped when only half cut through: the whole apparatus swung violently. He had only just time sufficient to seize the regulating gear.

The severed chain beat against the rock; the eight cables strained; the huge mass, sawed and cut through, detached itself from the wreck; the belly of the hull opened, and the iron flooring of the engine-room was visible below the keel.

If he had not seized the regulating tackle at that instant, it would have fallen. But his powerful hand was there, and it descended steadily.

When the brother of Jean Bart, Peter Bart, that powerful and sagacious toper, that poor Dunkirk fisherman, who used to talk familiarly with the Grand Admiral of France, went to the rescue of the galley "*Langeron*," in distress in the Bay of Ambleteuse, endeavouring to save the heavy floating mass in the midst of the breakers of that furious bay, he rolled up the mainsail, tied it with sea-reeds, and trusted to the ties to break away of themselves, and give the sail to the wind at the right moment. Just so Gilliatt trusted to the breaking of the chain, and the same eccentric feat of daring was crowned with the same success.

The tackle, taken in hand by Gilliatt, held out and worked well. Its function, as will be remembered, was to moderate the powers of

the apparatus, thus reduced from many to one, and by bringing them into united action. The gear had some similarity to a bridle of a bow-line, except that instead of trimming a sail it served to balance a complicated mechanism.

Erect, and with his hand upon the capstan, Gilliatt, so to speak, was enabled to feel the pulse of the apparatus.

It was here that his inventive genius manifested itself.

A remarkable coincidence of forces was the result.

While the machinery of the *Durande*, detached in a mass, was lowering to the sloop, the sloop rose slowly to receive it. The wreck and the salvage vessel assisting each other in opposite ways, saved half the labour of the operation.

The tide swelling quietly between the two *Douvres* raised the sloop and brought it nearer to the *Durande*. The sea was more than conquered; it was tamed and broken in. It became, in fact, part and parcel of the organization of power.

The rising waters lifted the vessel without any sort of shock, gently, and almost with precaution, as one would handle porcelain.

Gilliatt combined and proportioned the two labours, that of the water and that of the apparatus; and, standing steadfast at the capstan, like some terrible statue obeyed by all the movements around it at the same moment, regulated the slowness of the descent by the slow rise of the sea.

There was no jerk given by the waters; no slip among the tackle. It was a strange collaboration of all the natural forces subdued. On one side, gravitation lowering the huge bulk, on the other the sea raising the bark. The attraction of heavenly bodies which causes the tide, and the attractive force of the earth, which men call weight, seemed to conspire together to aid his plans. There was no hesitation, no stoppage in their service; under the dominance of mind these passive forces became active auxiliaries. From minute to minute the work advanced; the interval between the wreck and the sloop diminished insensibly. The approach continued in silence, and as in a sort of terror of the man who stood there. The elements received his orders and fulfilled them.

Nearly at the moment the tide ceased to raise it, the cable ceased to slide. Suddenly, but without commotion, the pulleys stopped. The vast machine had taken its place in the bark, as if placed there by a powerful hand. It stood straight, upright, motionless, firm. The iron floor of the engine-room rested with its four corners evenly upon the hold.

The work was accomplished.

Gilliatt contemplated it, lost in thought.

He was not the spoiled child of success. He bent under the weight of his great joy. He felt his limbs, as it were, sinking; and, contemplating his triumph, he, who had never been shaken by danger, began to tremble.

He gazed upon the sloop under the wreck, and at the machinery in the sloop. He seemed to feel it hard to believe it true. It might have been supposed that he had never looked forward to that which he had accomplished. A miracle had been wrought by his hands, and he contemplated it in bewilderment.

His reverie lasted but a short time.

Starting like one awakening from a deep sleep, he seized his saw, cut the eight cables, separated now from the sloop, thanks to the rising of the tide, by only about ten feet; sprang aboard, took a bunch of cord, made four slings, passed them through the rings prepared beforehand, and fixed on both sides aboard the sloop the four chains of the funnel which only an hour before had been still fastened to their places aboard the *Durande*.

The funnel being secured, he disengaged the upper part of the machinery. A square portion of the planking of the *Durande* was adhering to it; he struck off the nails and relieved the sloop of this encumbrance of planks and beams, which fell over on to the rocks—a great assistance in lightening it.

For the rest, the sloop, as has been foreseen, behaved well under the burden of the machinery. It had sunk in the water, but only to a good water-line. Although massive, the engine of the *Durande* was less heavy than the pile of stones and the cannon which he had once brought back from *Herm* in the sloop.

All then was ended; he had only to depart.

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## IX.

### A SLIP BETWEEN CUP AND LIP.

ALL was not ended.

To reopen the gorge thus closed by the portion of the *Durande's* bulwarks, and at once to push out with the sloop beyond the rocks, nothing could appear more clear and simple. On the sea every minute is urgent. There was little wind; scarcely a wrinkle on the open sea. The afternoon was beautiful, and promised a fine night. The sea indeed was calm, but the ebb had begun. The moment was favourable for starting. There would be the ebb-tide for leaving the *Douvres*, and the flood would carry him into *Guernsey*. It would be possible to be at *St. Sampson's* at daybreak.

But an unexpected obstacle presented itself. There was a flaw in his arrangements which had baffled all his foresight.

The machinery was freed, but the chimney was not.

The tide, by raising the sloop to the wreck suspended in the air, had diminished the dangers of the descent, and abridged the labour. But this diminution of the interval had left the top of the funnel entangled in the kind of gaping frame formed by the open hull of the *Durande*. The funnel was held fast there as between four walls.

The services rendered by the sea had been accompanied by that unfortunate drawback. It seemed as if the waves, constrained to obey, had avenged themselves by a malicious trick.

It is true that what the flood-tide had done, the ebb would undo.

The funnel, which was rather more than three fathoms in height, was buried more than eight feet in the wreck. The water-level would fall about twelve feet. Thus the funnel, descending with the falling tide, would have four feet of room to spare, and would clear itself easily.

But how much time would elapse before that release would be completed? Six hours.

In six hours it would be near midnight. What means would there be of attempting to start at such an hour? What channel could he find among all those breakers, so full of dangers even by day? How was he to risk his vessel in the depth of black night in that inextricable labyrinth, that ambuscade of shoals?

There was no help for it. He must wait for the morrow. These six hours lost entailed a loss of twelve hours at least.

He could not even advance the labour by opening the mouth of the gorge. His break-water was necessary against the next tide.

He was compelled to rest. Folding his arms was almost the only thing which he had not yet done since his arrival on the rocks.

This forced inaction irritated, almost vexed him with himself, as if it had been his fault. He thought "what would *Déruchette* say of me if she saw me thus doing nothing?"

And yet this interval for regaining his strength was not unnecessary.

The sloop was now at his command; he determined to pass the night in it.

He mounted once more to fetch his sheepskin upon the *Great Douvre*; descended again, supped off a few limpets and *châtaignes de mer*, drank, being very thirsty, a few draughts of water from his can, which was nearly emptied, enveloped himself in the skin, the wool of which felt comforting, lay down like a watch-dog beside the engine, drew his red cap over his eyes, and slept.

His sleep was profound. It was such sleep as men enjoy who have completed a great labour.

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## X.

### SEA-WARNINGS.

IN the middle of the night he awoke suddenly, and with a jerk like the recoil of a spring.

He opened his eyes.

The *Douvres*, rising high over his head, were lighted up as by the white glow of a burning ember. Over all the dark escarpment of the rock there was a light like the reflection of a fire.

Where could this fire come from?

It was from the water.

The aspect of the sea was extraordinary.



The water seemed a-fire. As far as the eye could reach, among the reefs and beyond them, the sea ran with flame. The flame was not red; it had nothing in common with the grand living fires of volcanic craters or of great furnaces. There was no sparkling, no glare, no purple edges, no noise. Long trails of a bluish tint simulated upon the water the folds of a winding-sheet. A pale trembling glow was spread over the waves. It was the spectre of a great fire rather than the fire itself. It was in some degree like the glow of unearthly flames lighting the inside of a sepulchre—a burning darkness.

The night itself, dim, vast, and wide-diffused, was the fuel of that cold flame. It was a strange illumination issuing out of blindness. The shadows themselves formed part of that phantom-fire.

The sailors of the Channel are familiar with those indescribable phosphorescences, full of warning to the navigator. They are nowhere more surprising than in the "Great V," near Isigny.

By this light surrounding objects lose their reality. A spectral glimmer renders them, as it were, transparent. Rocks become no more than outlines. Cables of anchors look like iron bars heated to a white heat. The nets of the fishermen beneath the water seem webs of fire. The half of the oar above the waves is dark as ebony, the rest in the sea like silver. The drops from the blades uplifted from the water fall in starry showers upon the sea. Every boat leaves a furrow behind it like a comet's tail. The sailors, wet and luminous, seem like men in flames. If you plunge a hand into the water, you withdraw it clothed in flame. The flame is dead, and is not felt. Your arm becomes a firebrand. You see the forms of things in the sea roll beneath the waves as in liquid fire. The foam twinkles. The fish are tongues of fire, or fragments of the forked lightning, moving in the depths.

The reflection of this brightness had passed over the closed eyelids of Gilliatt in the sloop. It was this that had awakened him.

His awakening was opportune.

The ebb tide had run out, and the waters were beginning to rise again. The funnel, which had become disengaged during his sleep, was about to enter again into the yawning hollow above it.

It was rising slowly.

A rise of another foot would have entangled it in the wreck again. A rise of one foot is equivalent to half an hour's tide. If he intended, therefore, to take advantage of that temporary deliverance once more within his reach, he had just half an hour before him.

He leaped to his feet.

Urgent as the situation was, he stood for a few moments meditative, contemplating the phosphorescence of the waves.

Gilliatt knew the sea in all its phases. Notwithstanding all her tricks, and often as he had

suffered from her terrors, he had long been her companion. That mysterious entity which we call the ocean had nothing in its secret thoughts which Gilliatt could not divine. Observation, meditation, and solitude had given him a quick perception of coming changes, of wind, or cloud, or wave.

Gilliatt hastened to the top-ropes and paid out some cable; then, being no longer held fast by the anchors, he seized the boat-hook of the sloop and pushed her towards the entrance to the gorge, some fathoms from the Durande and quite near to the breakwater. Here, as the Guernsey sailors say, it had *du rang*. In less than ten minutes the sloop was withdrawn from beneath the carcass of the wreck. There was no farther danger of the funnel being caught in a trap. The tide might rise now.

And yet Gilliatt's manner was not that of one about to take his departure.

He stood considering the light upon the sea once more, but his thoughts were not of starting. He was thinking of how to fix the sloop again, and how to fix it more firmly than ever, though near to the exit from the defile.

Up to this time he had only used the two anchors of the sloop, and had not yet employed the little anchor of the Durande, which he had found, as will be remembered, among the breakers. This anchor had been deposited by him, in readiness for any emergency, in a corner of the sloop, with a quantity of hawsers, and blocks of top-ropes, and his cable, all furnished beforehand with large knots, which prevented its dragging. He now let go this third anchor, taking care to fasten the cable to a rope, one end of which was slung through the anchor ring, while the other was attached to the windlass of the sloop. In this manner he made a kind of triangular, triple anchorage, much stronger than the moorings with two anchors. All this indicated keen anxiety, and a redoubling of precautions. A sailor would have seen in this operation something similar to an anchorage in bad weather, when there is fear of a current, which might carry the vessel under the wind.

The phosphorescence which he had been observing, and upon which his eye was now fixed once more, was threatening, but serviceable at the same time. But for it he would have been held fast locked in sleep, and deceived by the night. The strange appearance upon the sea had awakened him, and made things about him visible.

The light which it shed among the rocks was indeed ominous; but, disquieting as it appeared to be to Gilliatt, it had served to show him the dangers of his position, and had rendered possible his operations in extricating the sloop. Henceforth, whenever he should be able to set sail, the vessel, with its freight of machinery, would be free.

And yet the idea of departing was further than ever from his mind. The sloop being fixed in its new position, he went in quest of the strongest chain which he had in his store-cavern, and

attaching it to the nails driven into the two Douvres, he fortified from within with this chain the rampart of planks and beams, already protected from without by the cross chain. Far from opening the entrance to the defile, he made the barrier more complete.

The phosphorescence lighted him still, but it was diminishing. The day, however, was beginning to break.

Suddenly he paused to listen.

## XI.

### MURMURS IN THE AIR.

A FEEBLE, indistinct sound seemed to reach his ear from somewhere in the far distance.

At certain hours the great deeps give forth a murmuring noise.

He listened a second time. The distant noise recommenced. Gilliatt shook his head like one who recognises at last something familiar to him.

A few minutes later he was at the other extremity of the alley between the rocks, at the entrance facing the east, which had remained open until then, and by heavy blows of his hammer was driving large nails into the sides of the gullet near "The Man" rock, as he had done at the gullet of the Douvres.

The crevices of these rocks were prepared and well furnished with timber, almost all of which was heart of oak. The rock on this side being much broken up, there were abundant cracks, and he was able to fix even more nails there than in the base of the two Douvres.

Suddenly, and as if some great breath had passed over it, the luminous appearance on the waters vanished. The twilight, becoming paler every moment, assumed its functions.

The nails being driven, Gilliatt dragged beams and cords, and then chains to the spot; and without taking his eyes off his work, or permitting his mind to be diverted for a moment, he began to construct across the gorge of "The Man," with beams fixed horizontally and made fast by cables, one of those open barriers which science has now adopted under the name of breakwaters.

Those who have witnessed, for example, at La Rocquaine in Guernsey, or at Bourg-d'Eau in France, the effect produced by a few posts fixed in the rock, will understand the power of these simple preparations. This sort of breakwater is a combination of what is called in France *épi* with what is called in England "a dam." The breakwater is the chevaux-de-frise of fortifications against tempests. Man can only struggle against the sea by taking advantage of this principle of dividing its forces.

Meanwhile the sun had risen, and was shining brightly. The sky was clear, the sea calm.

Gilliatt pressed on his work. He, too, was calm; but there was anxiety in his haste. He passed with long strides from rock to rock, and

returned dragging wildly sometimes a rider, sometimes a binding strake. The utility of all this preparation of timbers now became manifest. It was evident that he was about to confront a danger which he had foreseen.

A strong iron bar served him as a lever for moving the beams.

The work was executed so fast that it was rather a rapid growth than a construction. He who has never seen a military pontooner at his work can scarcely form an idea of this rapidity.

The eastern gullet was still narrower than the western. There were but five or six feet of interval between the rocks. The smallness of this opening was an assistance. The space to be fortified and closed up being very little, the apparatus would be stronger, and might be more simple. Horizontal beams, therefore, sufficed, the upright ones being useless.

The first cross-pieces of the breakwater being fixed, Gilliatt mounted upon them and listened once more.

The murmurs had become significant.

He continued his construction. He supported it with two catheads of the Durande, bound to the frame of beams by cords passed through the three pulley-sheaves. He made the whole fast by chains.

The construction was little more than a colossal hurdle, having beams for rods, and chains in the place of wattles.

It seemed woven together quite as much as built.

He multiplied the fastenings, and added nails where they were necessary.

Having obtained a great quantity of bar iron from the wreck, he had been able to make a large number of these heavy nails.

While still at work, he broke some biscuit with his teeth. He was thirsty, but he could not drink, having no more fresh water. He had emptied the can at his meal of the evening before.

He added afterwards four or five more pieces of timber; then climbed again upon the barrier and listened.

The noises from the horizon had ceased; all was still.

The sea was smooth and quiet, deserving all those complimentary phrases which worthy citizens bestow upon it when satisfied with a trip—"a mirror," "a pond," "like oil," and so forth. The deep blue of the sky responded to the deep green tint of the ocean. The sapphire and the emerald hues vied with each other. Each were perfect. Not a cloud on high, not a line of foam below. In the midst of all this splendour, the April sun rose magnificently. It was impossible to imagine a lovelier day.

On the verge of the horizon a flight of birds of passage formed a long dark line against the sky. They were flying fast, as if alarmed.

Gilliatt set to work again to raise the breakwater.

He raised it as high as he could—as high,



indeed, as the curving of the rocks would permit.

Towards noon the sun appeared to him to give more than its usual warmth. Noon is the critical time of the day. Standing upon the powerful frame which he had built up, he paused again to survey the wide expanse.

The sea was more than tranquil. It was a dull dead calm. No sail was visible. The sky

was everywhere clear; but from blue it had become white. The whiteness was singular. To the west, and upon the horizon, was a little spot of a sickly hue. The spot remained in the same place, but by degrees grew larger. Near the breakers the waves shuddered, but very gently.

Gilliat had done well to build his breakwater.

A tempest was approaching.

The elements had determined to give battle.

## BOOK III.

### THE STRUGGLE.

#### I.

##### EXTREMES MEET.

Nothing is more threatening than a late equinox.

The appearance of the sea presents a strange phenomenon, resulting from what may be called the arrival of the ocean winds.

In all seasons, but particularly at the epoch of the Syzygies, at the moment when least expected, the sea sometimes becomes singularly tranquil. That vast perpetual movement ceases; a sort of drowsiness and languor overspreads it; and it seems weary and about to rest. Every rag of bunting, from the tiny streamer of the fishing-boat to the great flag of the ships of war, droops against the mast. The admiral's flag, the Royal and Imperial ensigns, sleep alike.

Suddenly all these streamers begin to flutter gently.

If there happen to be clouds, the moment has then come for making the formation of the *cirri*; if the sun is setting, for observing the red tints of the horizon; or if it be night and there is a moon, for looking attentively for the halo.

It is then that the captain or commander of a squadron, if he happen to possess one of those storm indicators, the inventor of which is unknown, notes his instrument carefully, and takes his precautions against the south wind, if the clouds have an appearance like dissolved sugar; or against the north, if they exfoliate in crystallizations like brakes of brambles, or like fir woods. Then, too, the poor Irish or Breton fisherman, after having consulted some mysterious gnomon engraved by the Romans or by demons upon one of those straight enigmatical stones, which are called in Brittany *Menhir*, and in Ireland *Cruach*, hauls his boat up on the shore.

Meanwhile the serenity of sky and ocean continues. The day dawns radiant, and the Aurora smiles. It was this which filled the old poets and seers with religious horror; for men dared to suspect the falsity of the sun. *Solem quis dicere falsum audeat?*

The sombre vision of nature's secret laws is interdicted to man by the fatal opacity of sur-

rounding things. The most terrible and perfidious of her aspects is that which masks the convulsions of the deep.

Some hours, and even days sometimes, pass thus. Pilots raise their telescopes here and there. The faces of old seamen have always an expression of severity left upon them by the vexation of perpetually looking out for changes.

Suddenly a great confused murmur is heard. A sort of mysterious dialogue takes place in the air.

Nothing unusual is seen.

The wide expanse is tranquil.

Yet the noises increase. The dialogue becomes more audible.

There is something beyond the horizon.

Something terrible. It is the wind.

The wind, or rather that populace of Titans which we call the gale. The unseen multitude.

India knew them as the Maroubis, Judea as the Keroubim, Greece as the Aquilones. They are the invisible winged creatures of the Infinite. Their blasts sweep over the earth.

#### II.

##### THE OCEAN WINDS.

WHENCE come they? From the immeasurable deep. Their wide wings need the breadth of the ocean gulf; the spaciousness of desert solitudes. The Atlantic, the Pacific—those vast blue plains—are their delight. They hasten thither in flocks. Commander Page witnessed, far out at sea, seven water-spouts at once. They wander there, wild, terrible! The ever-ending, yet eternal flux and reflux, is their work. The extent of their power, the limits of their will, none know. They are the Sphinxes of the abyss; Gama was their *Edipus*. In that dark, ever-moving expanse, they appear with faces of cloud. He who perceives their pale lineaments in that wide dispersion, the horizon of the sea, feels himself in presence of an undoubted power. It might be imagined that the proximity of human intelligence disquieted them, and that they revolted against it. The

mind of man is invincible, but the elements battle him. He can do nothing against the power which is everywhere, and which none can bind. The gentle breath becomes a gale, smites with the force of a war-club, and then becomes gentle again. The winds attack with a terrible crash, and defend themselves by falling into nothingness. He who would encounter them must use artifice. Their varying tactics, their swift, redoubled blows, confuse. They fly as often as they attack. They are tenacious and impalpable. Who can circumvent them? The prow of the *Argo*, cut from an oak of Dodona's grove, that mysterious pilot of the bark, spoke to them, and they insulted that pilot-godess. Columbus, beholding their approach near *La Pinta*, mounted upon the poop and addressed them with the first verses of St. John's Gospel. Surcouf defied them: "Here come the gang," he used to say. Napier greeted them with cannon balls. They assume the dictatorship of chaos.

Chaos is theirs, in which to wreak their mysterious vengeance; the den of the winds is more monstrous than that of lions. How many corpses lie in its deep recesses, where the winds beat without pity upon that obscure and ghastly mass! The winds are heard wheresoever they go, but they give ear to none. Their acts resemble crimes. None know on whom they cast their hoary surf; with what ferocity they hover over shipwrecks, looking at time as if they flung their impious foam-flakes in the face of heaven. They are the tyrants of unknown regions. "*Lugghi spaventosi*," murmured the Venetian mariners.

The trembling fields of space are subjected to their fierce assaults. Things unspeakable come to pass in those deserted regions. Some horseman rides in the gloom; the air is full of a forest sound; nothing is visible, but the tramp of cavalcades is heard. The noonday is overcast with sudden night; a tornado passes. Or it is midnight, which suddenly becomes bright as day; the polar lights are in the heavens. Whirlwinds in opposite ways, and in a sort of hideous dance, a stamping of the storms upon the waters. A cloud, overburdened, opens and falls to earth. Other clouds, filled with red light, flash and roar, then frown again ominously. Emptied of their lightnings, they are but as spent brands. Pent-up rains dissolve in mists. Yonder sea appears a fiery furnace in which the rains are falling; flames seem to issue from the waves. The white gleam of the ocean under the shower is reflected to marvelous distances. The different masses transform themselves into uncouth shapes. Monstrous whirlpools make strange hollows in the sky. The vapours revolve, the waves spin, the giddy Naiads roll; sea and sky are livid; noises as of cries of despair are in the air.

Great sheaves of shadow and darkness are gathered up, trembling in the far depths of the sky. At times there is a convulsion. The rumour becomes tumult, as the wave becomes

surge. The horizon, a confused mass of strata, oscillating ceaselessly, murmurs in a continual undertone. Strange and sudden outbursts break through the monotony. Cold airs rush forth, succeeded by warm blasts. The trepidation of the sea betokens anxious expectation, agony, terror profound. Suddenly the hurricane comes down, like a wild beast, to drink of the ocean—a monstrous draught! The water rises to the invisible mouth; a mound of water is formed; the swell increases, and the waterspout appears; the Prester of the ancients, stalactite above, stalagmite below; a whirling, double-inverted cone; a point in equilibrium upon another, the embrace of two mountains—a mountain of foam ascending, a mountain of vapour descending—terrible coition of the cloud and the wave. Like the column in Holy Writ, the waterspout is dark by day and luminous by night. In its presence the thunder itself is silent, and seems cowed.

The vast commotion of those solitudes has its gamut, a terrible crescendo. There is the gust, the squall, the storm, the gale, the tempest, the whirlwind, the waterspout, the seven chords of the lyre of the winds, the seven notes of the firmament. The heavens are a clear space, the sea a vast round; but a breath passes, they have vanished, and all is fury and wild confusion.

Such are these inhospitable realms.

The winds rush, fly, swoop down, die out, commence again; hover above, whistle, roar, and smile; frenzied, wanton, unbridled, or sinking at ease upon the raging waves. Their howlings have a harmony of their own. They make all the heavens sonorous. They blow in the cloud as in a trumpet; they sing through the infinite space with the mingled tones of clarions, horns, bugles, and trumpets—a sort of Promethean fanfare.

Such was the music of ancient Pan. Their harmonies are terrible. They have a colossal joy in the darkness. They drive and disperse great ships. Night and day, in all seasons, from the tropics to the pole, there is no truce; sounding their fatal trumpet through the tangled thickets of the clouds and waves, they pursue the grim chase of vessels in distress. They have their packs of bloodhounds, and take their pleasure, setting them to bark among the rocks and billows. They huddle the clouds together, and drive them diverse. They mould and knead the supple waters as with a million hands.

The water is supple because it is incompressible. It slips away without effort. Borne down on one side, it escapes on the other. It is thus that waters become waves, and that the billows are a token of their liberty.

### III.

#### THE NOISES EXPLAINED.

THE grand descent of winds upon the world takes place at the equinoxes. At this period



the balance of tropic and pole librates, and the vast atmospheric tides pour their flood upon one hemisphere, and their ebb upon another. The signs of Libra and Aquarius have reference to these phenomena.

It is the time of tempests.

The sea awaits their coming, keeping silence.

Sometimes the sky looks sickly. Its face is wan. A thick dark veil obscures it. The mariners observe with uneasiness the angry aspect of the clouds.

But it is its air of calm contentment which they dread the most. A smiling sky in the equinoxes is the tempest in gay disguise. It was under skies like these that "The Tower of Weeping Women," in Amsterdam, was filled with wives and mothers scanning the far horizon.

When the vernal or autumnal storms delay to break, they are gathering strength; hoarding up their fury for more sure destruction. Beware of the gale that has been long delayed. It was Angot who said that "the sea pays well odd debts."

When the delay is unusually long, the sea betokens her impatience only by a deeper calm, but the magnetic intensity manifests itself by what might be called a fiery humour in the sea. Fire issues from the waves; electric air, phosphoric water. The sailors feel a strange lassitude. This time is particularly perilous for iron vessels; their hulls are then liable to produce variations of the compass, leading them to destruction. The Transatlantic steam-vessel "Iowa" perished from this cause.

To those who are familiar with the sea, its aspect at this moment is singular. It may be imagined to be both desiring and fearing the approach of the cyclone. Certain unions, though strongly urged by nature, are attended by this strange conjunction of terror and desire. The lioness in her tenderest moods flies from the lion. Thus the sea, in the fire of her passion, trembles at the near approach of her union with the tempest. The nuptials are prepared. Like the marriages of the ancient emperors, they are celebrated with immolations. The fête is heralded with disasters.

Meanwhile, from yonder deeps, from the great open sea, from the unapproachable latitudes, from the lurid horizon of the watery waste, from the utmost bounds of the free ocean, the winds pour down.

Listen; for this is the famous equinox.

The storm prepares mischief. In the old mythology these entities were recognised, indistinctly moving, in the grand scene of nature. Æolus plotted with Boreas. The alliance of element with element is necessary; they divide their task. One has to give impetus to the wave, the cloud, the stream: night is an auxiliary, and must be employed. There are compasses to be falsified, beacons to be extinguished, lanterns of lighthouses to be masked, stars to be hidden. The sea must lend her aid. Every storm is preceded by a murmur. Behind

the horizon line there is a premonitory whispering among the hurricanes.

This is the noise which is heard afar off in the darkness amidst the terrible silence of the sea.

It was this significant whispering which Gil-liatt had noted. The phosphorescence on the water had been the first warning; this murmur the second.

If the demon Legion exists, he is assuredly no other than the wind.

The wind is complex, but the air is one.

Hence it follows that all storms are mixed.

The unity of the air demonstrates it.

The entire abyss of heaven takes part in a tempest, the entire ocean also. The totality of its forces is marshalled for the strife. A wave is the ocean gulf; a gust is a gulf of the atmosphere. A contest with a storm is a contest with all the powers of sea and sky.

It was Messier, that great authority among naval men, the pensive astronomer of the little lodge at Cluny, who said, "The wind comes from everywhere and is everywhere." He had no faith in the idea of winds imprisoned even in inland seas. With him there were no Mediterranean winds; he declared that he recognised them as they wandered about the earth. He affirmed that on a certain day, at a certain hour, the Föhn of the Lake of Constance, the ancient Favonius of Lucretius, had traversed the horizon of Paris; on another day, the Bora of the Adriatic; on another day, the whirling Notus, which is supposed to be confined in the round of the Cyclades. He indicated their currents. He did not believe it impossible that the "Autan," which circulates between Corsica and the Balearic Isles, could escape from its bounds. He did not admit the theory of winds imprisoned like bears in their dens. It was he, too, who said that "every rain comes from the tropics, and every flash of lightning from the pole." The wind, in fact, becomes saturated with electricity at the intersection of the colures which marks the extremity of the axis, and with water at the equator; bringing moisture from the equatorial line, and the electric fluid from the poles.

The wind is ubiquitous.

It is certainly not meant by this that the winds never move in zones. Nothing is better established than the existence of those continuous air currents; and aerial navigation by means of the wind-boats, to which the passion for Greek terminology has given the name of "aeroscaphes," may one day succeed in utilizing the chief of these streams of wind. The regular course of air streams is an incontestable fact. There are both rivers of wind and rivulets of wind, although their branches are exactly the reverse of water currents; for in the air it is the rivulets which flow out of the rivers, and the smaller rivers which flow out of the great streams instead of falling into them. Hence, instead of concentration, we have dispersion.

The united action of the winds and the unity

of the atmosphere result from this dispersion. The displacement of one molecule produces the displacement of another. The vast body of air becomes subject to one agitation. To these profound causes of coalition we must add the irregular surface of the earth, whose mountains furrow the atmosphere, contorting and diverting the winds from their course, and determining the directions of counter currents in infinite radiations.

The phenomenon of the wind is the oscillation of two oceans one against the other; the ocean of air, superimposed upon the ocean of water, rests upon these currents, and is convulsed with this vast agitation.

The indivisible cannot produce separate action. No partition divides wave from wave. The islands of the Channel feel the influence of the Cape of Good Hope. Navigation everywhere contends with the same monster; the sea is one hydra. The waves cover it as with a coat of scales.

Upon that unity reposes an infinite variety.

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#### IV.

##### TURBA TURMA.

ACCORDING to the compass there are thirty-two winds, that is to say, thirty-two points. But these directions may be subdivided indefinitely. Classed by its directions, the wind is incalculable; classed by its kinds, it is infinite. Homer himself would have shrunk from the task of enumerating them.

The polar current encounters the tropical current. Heat and cold are thus combined; the equilibrium is disturbed by a shock; the wave of wind issues forth and is distended, scattered and broken up in every direction in fierce streams. The dispersion of the gusts shakes the streaming locks of the wind upon the four corners of the horizon.

All the winds which blow are there. The wind of the Gulf Stream, which disgorges the great fogs of Newfoundland; the wind of Peru, in the region of silent heavens, where no man ever heard the thunder roar; the wind of Nova Scotia, where lies the great auk (*Alea impennis*) with his furrowed beak; the iron whirlwinds of the Chinese Seas; the wind of Mozambique, which destroys the canoes and junks; the electric wind, which the people of Japan denounce by the beating of a gong; the African wind, which blows between Table Mountain and the Mountain of the Devil, where it gains its liberty; the currents of the equator, which pass over the trade winds, describing a parabola, the summit of which is always to the west; the Plutonian wind, which issues from craters, the terrible breath of flames; the singular wind peculiar to the volcano Awa, which occasions a perpetual olive tint in the north; the Java monsoon, against which the people construct those casemates known as hurricane houses; the branch-

ing north winds, called by the English "Bush-winds;" the curved squalls of the Straits of Malacca, observed by Horsburgh; the powerful south-west wind, called Pampero in Chili, and Rebojo at Buenos Ayres, which carries the great condor out to sea, and saves him from the pit where the Indian, concealed under a bullock-hide newly stripped, watches for him, lying on his back, and bending his great bow with his feet; the chemical wind, which, according to Lemery, produces thunder-bolts from the clouds; the Harmattan of the Caffres; the Polar snow-driver, which harnesses itself to the everlasting icebergs; the wind of the Gulf of Bengal, which sweeps over a continent to pillage the triangular town of wooden booths at Nijni-Novogorod, in which is held the great fair of Asia; the wind of the Cordilleras, agitator of great waves and forests; the wind of the Australian Archipelago, where the bee-hunters take the wild hives hidden under the forks of the branches of the giant eucalyptus; the Sirocco, the Mistral, the Hurricane, the dry winds, the inundating and diluvian winds, the torrid winds which scatter dust from the plains of Brazil upon the streets of Genoa, which obey and yet revolt against the diurnal rotation, and of which Herrera said, '*Malo viento contra el sol*;' those winds which hunt in couples conspiring mischief, the one undoing the work of the other; and those old winds which assailed Columbus on the coast of Veraguas, and which during forty days, from the 21st of October to the 28th of November, 1520, delayed and nearly frustrated Magellan's approach to the Pacific; and those which dismasted the Armada and confounded Philip II. Others, too, there are, of the names of which there is no end. The winds, for instance, which carry showers of frogs and locusts, and drive before them clouds of living things across the ocean; those which blow in what are called "Wind-jumps," and whose function is to destroy ships at sea; those which at a single blast throw the cargo out of trim, and compel the vessel to continue her course half broadside over; the winds which construct the circum-cumuli; the winds which mass together the circum-strati; the dark, heavy winds swelled with rains; the winds of the hail-storms; the fever winds, whose approach sets the salt springs and sulphur springs of Calabria boiling; those which give a glittering appearance to the fur of African panthers, prowling among the bushes of Cape Ferro; those which come shaking from the cloud, like the tongue of a trigonocephal, the terrible forked lightning; and those which bring whirlwinds of black snow. Such is the legion of winds.

The Douvres rock heard their distant tramp at the moment when Gilliatt was constructing his breakwater.

As we have said, the wind means the combination of all the winds of the earth.

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## V.

## GILLIATT'S ALTERNATIVES.

THE mysterious forces had chosen their time well.

Chance, if chance exists, is sometimes far-seeing.

While the sloop had been anchored in the little creek of "The Man" rock, and as long as the machinery had been prisoned in the wreck, Gilliatt's position had been impregnable. The sloop was in safety; the machinery sheltered. The Douvres, which held the hull of the *Durande* fast, condemned it to slow destruction, but protected it against unexpected accidents. In any event, one resource had remained to him. If the engine had been destroyed, Gilliatt would have been uninjured. He had still the sloop by which to escape.

But to wait till the sloop was removed from the anchorage where she was inaccessible; to allow it to be fixed in the defile of the Douvres; to watch, as it were, until the sloop, too, was entangled in the rocks; to permit him to complete the salvage, the moving, and the final embarkation of the machinery; to do no damage to that wonderful construction by which one man was enabled to put the whole aboard his bark; to acquiesce, in fact, in the success of his exploits so far—this was but the trap which the elements had laid for him. Now, for the first time, he began to perceive in all its sinister characteristics the trick which the sea had been meditating so long.

The machinery, the sloop, and their master were all now within the gorge of the rocks. They formed but a single point. One blow, and the sloop might be dashed to pieces on the rock, the machinery destroyed, and Gilliatt drowned.

The situation could not have been more critical.

The sphinx which men have imagined concealing herself in the cloud, seemed to mock him with a dilemma.

"Go or stay."

To go would have been madness; to remain was terrible.

## VI.

## THE COMBAT.

GILLIATT ascended to the summit of the Great Douvre.

From hence he could see around the horizon.

The western side was appalling. A wall of cloud spread across it, barring the wide expanse from side to side, and ascending slowly from the horizon towards the zenith. This wall, straight lined, vertical, without a crevice in its height, without a rent in its structure, seemed built by the square, and measured by the plumb-line. It was cloud in the likeness of granite. Its escarpment, completely perpendicular at the southern extremity, curved a little towards the north, like

a bent sheet of iron, presenting the steep, slippery face of an inclined plane. The dark wall enlarged and grew; but its entablature never ceased for a moment to be parallel with the horizon line, which was almost indistinguishable in the gathering darkness. Silently, and altogether, the airy battlements ascended. No undulation, no wrinkle, no projection changed its shape or moved its place. The aspect of this immobility in movement was impressive. The sun, pale in the midst of a strange, sickly transparency, lighted up this outline of the Apocalypse. Already the cloudy bank had blotted out one half the space of the sky, shelving like the fearful tatus of the abyss. It was the uprising of a dark mountain between earth and heaven.

It was night falling suddenly upon midday.

There was a heat in the air as from an oven-door, coming from that mysterious mass on mass. The sky, which from blue had become white, was now turning from white to a slaty gray. The sea beneath, leaden-hued and dull. No breath, no wave, no noise. Far as eye could reach, the desert ocean. No sail was visible on any side. The birds had disappeared. Some monstrous treason seemed abroad.

The wall of cloud grew visibly larger.

This moving mountain of vapours, which was approaching the Douvres, was one of those which might be called the clouds of battle. Sinister appearances; some strange, furtive glance seemed cast upon the beholder through that obscure mass up-piled.

The approach was terrible.

Gilliatt observed it closely, and muttered to himself, "I am thirsty enough, but you will give me plenty to drink."

He stood there motionless a few moments, his eye fixed upon the cloud-bank, as if mentally taking a sounding of the tempest.

His *galérienne* was in the pocket of his jacket; he took it out and placed it on his head. Then he fetched from the cave, which had so long served him for a sleeping-place, a few things which he had kept there in reserve; he put on his overalls, and attired himself in his waterproof overcoat, like a knight who puts on his armour at the moment of battle. He had no shoes, but his naked feet had become hardened to the rocks.

This preparation for the storm being completed, he looked down upon his breakwater, grasped the knotted cord hurriedly, descended from the plateau of the Douvre, stepped on to the rocks below, and hastened to his store cavern. A few moments later he was at work. The vast silent cloud might have heard the strokes of his hammer. With the nails, ropes, and beams which still remained, he constructed for the eastern gullet a second frame, which he succeeded in fixing at ten or twelve feet from the other.

The silence was still profound. The blades of grass between the cracks of the rocks were not stirred.

The sun disappeared suddenly. Gilliatt looked up.

The rising cloud had just reached it. It was like the blotting out of day, succeeded by a mingled pale reflection.

The immense wall of cloud had changed its appearance. It no longer retained its unity. It had curved on reaching the zenith, whence it spread horizontally over the rest of the heavens. It had now its various stages. The tempest formation was visible, like the strata in the side of a trench. It was possible to distinguish the layers of the rain from the beds of hail. There was no lightning, but a horrible, diffused glare; for the idea of horror may be attached to light. The vague breathing of the storm was audible; the silence was broken by an obscure palpitation. Gilliatt, silent also, watched the giant blocks of vapour grouping themselves overhead, forming the shapeless mass of clouds. Upon the horizon brooded and lengthened out a band of mist of ashen hue; in the zenith, another band of lead color. Pale, ragged fragments of cloud hung from the great mass above upon the mist below. The pile of cloud which formed the background was wan, dull, gloomy. A thin, whitish, transverse cloud, coming no one could tell whither, cut the high dark wall obliquely from north to south. One of the extremities of this cloud trailed along the surface of the sea. At the point where it touched the waters a dense red vapour was visible in the midst of the darkness. Below it, smaller clouds, quite black and very low, were flying as if bewildered or moved by opposite currents of air. The immense cloud behind increased from all points at once, darkened the eclipse, and continued to spread its sombre pall. In the east, behind Gilliatt, there was only one clear porch in the heavens, which was rapidly being closed. Without any feeling of wind abroad, a strange flight of gray downy particles seemed to pass; they were fine, and scattered as if some gigantic bird had been plucked of its plumage behind the bank of cloud. A dark, compact roof had gradually formed itself, which on the verge of the horizon touched the sea, and mingled in darkness with it. The beholder had a vague sense of something advancing steadily towards him. It was vast, heavy, ominous. Suddenly an immense peal of thunder burst upon the air.

Gilliatt himself felt the shock. The rude reality in the midst of that visionary region has something in it terrific. The listener fancies that he hears something falling in the chamber of giants. No electric flash accompanied the report. It was a blind peal. The silence was profound again. There was an interval, as when combatants take up their position. Then appeared slowly, one after the other, great shapeless flashes; these flashes were silent. The wall of cloud was now a vast cavern, with roofs and arches. Outlines of forms were traceable among them; monstrous heads were vaguely shadowed forth;

rocks seemed to stretch out; elephants bearing turrets, seen for a moment, vanished. A column of vapour, straight, round, and dark, and surmounted by a white mist, simulated the form of a colossal steam-vessel engulfed, and hissing and smoking beneath the waves. Sheets of cloud undulated like folds of giant flags. In the centre, under a thick purple pall, a nucleus of dense fog sunk motionless, inert, impenetrable by the electric fires: a sort of hideous fœtus in the bosom of the tempest.

Suddenly Gilliatt felt a breath moving his hair. Two or three large drops of rain fell heavily around him on the rock. Then there was a second thunder-clap. The wind was rising.

The terror of darkness was at its highest point. The first peal of thunder had shaken the sea; the second rent the wall of cloud from top to base; a breach was visible; the pent-up deluge rushed towards it; the rent became like a gulf filled with rain. The outpouring of the tempest had begun.

The moment was terrible.

Rain, wind, lightnings, thunder, waves swirling upwards to the clouds, foam, hoarse noises, whistlings, mingled together, like monsters suddenly unloosed.

For a solitary man, imprisoned with an overloaded bark between two dangerous rocks in mid-ocean, no crisis could have been more menacing. The danger of the tide, over which he had triumphed, was nothing compared with the danger of the tempest.

Surrounded on all sides by dangers, Gilliatt, at the last moment, and before the crowning peril, had developed an ingenious strategy. He had secured his basis of operations in the enemies' territory; had pressed the rock into his service. The Douvres, originally his enemy, had become his second in that immense duel. Out of that sepulchre he had constructed a fortress. He was built up among these formidable sea ruins. He was blockaded, but well defended. He had, so to speak, set his back against the wall, and stood face to face with the hurricane. He had barricaded the narrow strait, that highway of the waves. This, indeed, was the only possible course. It seemed as if the ocean, like other despots, might be brought to reason by the aid of barricades. The sloop might be considered secure on three sides. Closely wedged between the two interior walls of the rock, made fast by three anchorings, she was sheltered from the north by the Little Douvre, on the south by the Great one: terrible escarpments, more accustomed to wreck vessels than to save them. On the western side she was protected by the frame of timbers made fast and nailed to the rocks, a tried barrier which had withstood the rude flood-tide of the sea; a veritable citadel-gate, having for its sides the columns of the rock—the two Douvres themselves. Nothing was to be feared from that side. It was on the eastern side only that there was danger.



On that side there was no protection but the breakwater. A breakwater is an apparatus for dividing and distributing. It requires at least two frames. Gilliatt had only had time to construct one. He was compelled to build the second in the very presence of the tempest.

Fortunately, the wind came from the north-west. The wind is not always adroit in its attacks. The north-west wind, which is the ancient "galerna," had little effect upon the Douvres. It assailed the rocks in flank, and drove the waves neither against the one nor the other of the two gulleys; so that, instead of rushing into a defile, they dashed themselves against a wall.

But the currents of the wind are curved, and it was probable that there would be some sudden change. If it should veer to the east before the second frame could be constructed, the peril would be great. The irruption of the sea into the gorge would be complete, and all would probably be lost.

The wildness of the storm went on increasing. The essence of a tempest is the rapid succession of its blows. That is its strength; but it is also its weakness. Its fury gives the opportunity to human intelligence, and man spies its weak points for his defence; but under what overwhelming assaults! No respite, no interruption, no truce, no pause for taking breath. There seems an unspeakable cowardice in that prodigality of inexhaustible resources.

All the tumult of the wide expanse rushed towards the Douvres. Voices were heard in the darkness. What could they be? The ancient terror of the sea was there. At times they seemed to speak as if some one was uttering words of command. There were clamours, strange trepidations, and then that majestic roar which the mariners call the "ocean cry." The indefinite and flying eddies of the wind whistled, while curling the waves and flinging them like giant quoits, cast by invisible athletes, against the breakers. The enormous surf streamed over all the rocks—torrents above, foam below. Then the roaring was redoubled. No uproar of men or beasts could yield an idea of that din which mingled with the incessant breaking of the sea. The clouds cannonaded, the hailstones poured their volleys, the surf mounted to the assault. As far as eye could reach, the sea was white—ten leagues of yeasty water filled the horizon. Doors of fire were opened, clouds seemed burnt by clouds, and showed like smoke above a nebulous red mass, resembling burning embers. Floating conflagrations rushed together and amalgamated, each changing the shape of the other. From the midst of the dark roof a terrible arsenal appeared to be emptied out, hurling downward from the gulf, pell-mell, water-spouts, hail, torrents, purple fire, phosphoric gleams, darkness, and lightnings.

Meanwhile Gilliatt seemed to pay no attention to the storm. His head was bent over his work. The second frame-work began to approach completion. To every clap of thunder

he replied with a blow of his hammer, making a cadence which was audible even amidst that tumult. He was bareheaded, for a gust had carried away his *galérienne*.

He suffered from a burning thirst. Little pools of rain had formed in the rocks around him. From time to time he took some water in the hollow of his hand and drank. Then, without even looking upward to observe the storm, he applied himself anew to his task.

All might depend upon a moment. He knew the fate that awaited him if his breakwater should not be completed in time. Of what avail could it be to lose a moment in looking for the approach of death?

The turmoil around him was like that of a vast bubbling cauldron. Crash and uproar were everywhere. Sometimes the lightning seemed to descend a sort of ladder. The electric flame returned incessantly to the same points of the rock, where there were probably metallic veins. Hailstones fell of enormous size. Gilliatt was compelled to shake the folds of his overcoat, even the pockets of which became filled with hail.

The storm had now rotated to the west, and was expending its fury upon the barricades of the two Douvres. But Gilliatt had faith in his breakwaters, and with good reason. These barricades, made of a great portion of the fore part of the Durande, took the shock of the waves easily. Elasticity is a resistance. The experiments of Stephenson establish the fact that, against the waves, which are themselves elastic, a raft of timber, joined and chained together in a certain fashion, will form a more powerful obstacle than a breakwater of masonry. The barriers of the Douvres fulfilled these conditions. They were, moreover, so ingeniously made fast, that the waves striking them beneath were like hammers beating in nails, pressing and consolidating the work upon the rocks. To demolish them it would have been necessary to overthrow the Douvres themselves. The surf, in fact, was only able to cast over upon the sloop some flakes of foam. On that side, thanks to the barrier, the tempest ended only in harmless insult. Gilliatt turned his back upon the scene. He heard composedly its useless rage upon the rocks behind him.

The foam-flakes, coming from all sides, were like flights of down. The vast, irritated ocean drowned the rocks, dashed over them, and raged within—penetrated into the network of their interior fissures, and issued again from the granitic masses by the narrow chinks, forming a kind of inexhaustible fountains playing peacefully in the midst of that deluge. Here and there a silvery network fell gracefully from these spouts into the sea.

The second frame of the eastern barrier was nearly completed. A few more knots of rope and ends of chains, and this new rampart would be ready to play its part in barring out the storm.

Suddenly there was a great brightness; the

rain ceased; the clouds rolled asunder; the wind had just shifted; a sort of high, dark window opened in the zenith, and the lightnings were extinguished. The end seemed to have come. It was but the commencement.

The change of wind was from the north-west to the north-east.

The storm was preparing to burst forth again with a new legion of hurricanes. The north was about to mount to the assault. Sailors call this dreaded moment of transition the "return storm." The southern wind brings most rain, the north wind most lightning.

The attack, coming now from the east, was directed against the weak point of the position.

This time Gilliatt interrupted his work and looked around him.

He stood erect upon a curved projection of the rock behind the second barrier, which was nearly finished. If the first frame had been carried away, it would have broken down the second, which was not yet consolidated, and must have crushed him. Gilliatt, in the place that he had chosen, must in that case have been destroyed before seeing the sloop, the machinery, and all his work shattered and swallowed up in the gulf. Such was the possibility which awaited him. He accepted it, and contemplated it sternly.

In that wreck of all his hope, to die at once would have been his desire; to die first, as he would have regarded it—for the machinery produced in his mind the effect of a living being. He moved aside his hair, which was beaten over his eyes by the wind, grasped his trusty mallet, drew himself up in a menacing attitude, and awaited the event.

He was not kept long in suspense.

A flash of lightning gave the signal; the livid opening in the zenith closed; a driving torrent of rain fell; then all became dark, save where the lightnings broke forth once more. The attack had recommenced in earnest.

A heavy swell, visible from time to time in the blaze of the lightning, was rolling in the east beyond "The Man" rock. It resembled a huge wall of glass. It was green and without foam, and it stretched across the wide expanse. It was advancing towards the breakwater, increasing as it approached. It was a singular kind of gigantic cylinder, rolling upon the ocean. The thunder kept up a hollow rumbling.

The great wave struck "The Man" rock, broke in twain, and passed beyond. The broken wave, rejoined, formed a mountain of water, and, instead of advancing in parallel line as before, came down perpendicularly upon the breakwater.

The shock was terrific: the whole wave became a roaring surf.

It is impossible for those who have not witnessed them to imagine those snowy avalanches which the sea thus precipitates, and under which it engulfs for the moment rocks of more than a hundred feet in height—such, for example, as the

Great Anderlo at Guernsey, and the Pinnacle at Jersey. At Saint Mary of Madagascar it passes completely over the Tintingue.

For some moments the sea drowned everything. Nothing was visible except the furious waters, an enormous breadth of foam, the whiteness of a winding-sheet blowing in the draught of a sepulchre; nothing was heard but the roaring storm working devastation around.

When the foam subsided, Gilliatt was still standing at his post.

The barrier had stood firm. Not a chain was broken, not a nail displaced. It had exhibited under the trial the two chief qualities of a breakwater; it had proved flexible as a hurdle and firm as a wall. The surf falling upon it had dissolved into a shower of drops.

A river of foam rushing along the zigzags of the defile, subsided as it approached the sloop.

The man who had put this curb upon the fury of the ocean took no rest.

The storm fortunately turned aside its fury for a moment. The fierce attack of the waves was renewed upon the wall of the rock. There was a respite, and Gilliatt took advantage of it to complete the interior barrier.

The daylight faded upon his labours. The hurricane continued its violence upon the flank of the rocks with a mournful solemnity. The stores of fire and water in the sky poured out incessantly without exhausting themselves. The undulations of the wind above and below were like the movements of a dragon.

Nightfall brought scarcely any deeper night. The change was hardly felt, for the darkness was never complete. Tempests, alternately darkening and illumining by their lightnings, are merely intervals of the visible and invisible. All is pale glare, and then all is darkness. Spectral shapes issue forth suddenly, and return as suddenly into the deep shade.

A phosphoric zone, tinged with the hue of the aurora borealis, appeared like ghastly flames behind the dense clouds, giving to all things a wan aspect, and making the rain-drops luminous.

This uncertain light aided Gilliatt, and directed him in his operations. By its help he was enabled to raise the forward barrier. The breakwater was now almost complete. As he was engaged in making fast a powerful cable to the last beam, the gale blew directly in his face; this compelled him to raise his head. The wind had shifted abruptly to the north-east. The assault upon the eastern gullet recommenced. Gilliatt cast his eyes around the horizon. Another great wall of water was approaching.

The wave broke with a great shock; a second followed; then another and another still; then five or six almost together; then a last shock of tremendous force.

This last wave, which was an accumulation of forces, had a singular resemblance to a living thing. It would not have been difficult to imagine in the midst of that swelling mass the



shapes of fins and gill-coverings. It fell heavily and broke upon the barriers. Its almost animal form was torn to pieces in the shape of spouts and gushes, resembling the crushing to death of some sea hydra upon that block of rocks and timbers. The swell rushed through, subsiding but devastating as it went. The huge wave seemed to bite and cling to its victim as it died. The rock shook to its base. A savage howling mingled with the roar; the foam flew far like the spouting of a leviathan.

The subsidence exhibited the extent of the ravages of the surf. This last escalade had not been ineffectual. The breakwater had suffered this time. A long and heavy beam, torn from the first barrier, had been carried over the second, and hurled violently upon the projecting rock on which Gilliatt had stood but a moment before. By good fortune he had not returned there. Had he done so, his death had been inevitable.

There was a remarkable feature in the fall of this beam, which, by preventing the frame-work rebounding, saved Gilliatt from greater dangers. It even proved useful to him, as will be seen, in another way.

Between the projecting rock and the interior wall of the defile there was a large interval, something like the notch of an axe or the split of a wedge. One of the extremities of the timber hurled into the air by the waves had stuck fast into this notch in falling. The gap had become enlarged.

Gilliatt was struck with an idea. It was that of bearing heavily on the other extremity.

The beam caught by one end in the nook, which it had widened, projected from it straight as an outstretched arm. This species of arm projected parallel with the anterior wall of the defile, and the disengaged end stretched from its resting-place about eighteen or twenty inches. A good distance for the object to be attained.

Gilliatt raised himself by means of his hands, feet, and knees to the escarpment, and then turned his back, pressing both his shoulders against the enormous lever. The beam was long, which increased its raising power. The rock was already loosened; but he was compelled to renew his efforts again and again. The sweat-drops rolled from his forehead as rapidly as the spray. The fourth attempt exhausted all his powers. There was a cracking noise; the gap, spreading in the shape of a fissure, opened its vast jaws, and the heavy mass fell into the narrow space of the defile with a noise like the echo of the thunder.

The mass fell straight, and without breaking, resting in its bed like a Druid cromlech precipitated in one piece.

The beam which had served as a lever descended with the rock, and Gilliatt, stumbling forward as it gave way, narrowly escaped falling.

The bed of the pass at this part was full of huge round stones, and there was little water.

The monolith lying in the boiling foam, the flakes of which fell on Gilliatt where he stood, stretched from side to side of the great parallel rocks of the defile, and formed a transversal wall, a sort of cross-stroke between the two escarpments. Its two ends touched the rocks. It had been a little too long to lie flat, but its summit of soft rock was struck off with the fall. The result of this fall was a singular sort of *cul-de-sac*, which may still be seen. The water behind this stony barrier is almost always tranquil.

This was a rampart more invincible still than the forward timbers of the Durande fixed between the two Douvres.

The barrier came opportunely.

The assaults of the sea had continued. The obstinacy of the waves is always increased by an obstacle. The first frame began to show signs of breaking up. One breach, however small, in a breakwater, is always serious. It inevitably enlarges, and there is no means of supplying its place, for the sea would sweep away the workmen.

A flash which lighted up the rocks revealed to Gilliatt the nature of the mischief—the beams broken down, the ends of rope and fragments of chain swinging in the winds, and a rent in the centre of the apparatus. The second frame was intact.

Though the block of stone so powerfully overturned by Gilliatt in the defile behind the breakwater was the strongest possible barrier, it had a defect. It was too low. The surge could not destroy, but could sweep over it.

It was useless to think of building it higher. Nothing but masses of rock could avail upon a barrier of stone; but how could such masses be detached? or, if detached, how could they be moved, or raised, or piled, or fixed? Timbers may be added, but rocks cannot.

Gilliatt was not Encecladus.

The very little height of this rocky isthmus rendered him anxious.

The effects of this fault were not long in showing themselves. The assaults upon the breakwater were incessant; the heavy seas seemed not merely to rage, but to attack with determination to destroy it. A sort of trampling noise was heard upon the jolted frame-work.

Suddenly the end of a binding strake, detached from the dislocated frame, was swept away over the second barrier and across the transversal rock, falling in the defile, where the water seized and carried it into the sinuosities of the pass. Gilliatt lost sight of it. It seemed probable that it would do some injury to the sloop. Fortunately, the water in the interior of the rocks, shut in on all sides, felt little of the commotion without. The waves there were comparatively trifling, and the shock was not likely to be very severe. For the rest, he had little time to spare for reflection upon this mishap. Every variety of danger was arising at once; the tempest was concentrated upon the vulnerable point; destruction was imminent.

The darkness was profound for a moment: the lightnings paused—a sort of sinister connivance. The cloud and the sea became one: there was a dull peal.

This was followed by a terrible outburst. The frame which formed the front of the barriers was swept away. The fragments of beams were visible in the rolling waters. The sea was using the first breakwater as an engine for making a breach in the second.

Gilliatt experienced the feeling of a general who sees his advanced guard driven in.

The second construction of beams resisted the shock. The apparatus behind it was powerfully secured and buttressed. But the broken frame was heavy, and was at the mercy of the waves, which were incessantly hurling it forward and withdrawing it. The ropes and chains which remained unsevered prevented its entirely breaking up, and the qualities which Gilliatt had given it as a means of defence made it, in the end, a more effective weapon of destruction. Instead of a buckler, it had become a battering-ram. Besides this, it was now full of irregularities from breaking; ends of timbers projected from all parts; and it was, as it were, covered with teeth and spikes. No sort of arm could have been more effective, or more fitted for the handling of the tempest. It was the projectile, while the sea played the part of the catapult.

The blows succeeded each other with a dismal regularity. Gilliatt, thoughtful and anxious, behind that barricaded portal listened to the sound of death knocking loudly for admittance.

He reflected with bitterness that, but for the fatal entanglement of the funnel of the *Durande* in the wreck, he would have been at that very moment, and even since the morning, once more at Guernsey, in the port, with the sloop out of danger, with the machinery saved.

The dreaded moment arrived. The destruction was complete. There was a sound like a death-rattle. The entire frame of the breakwater, the double apparatus crushed and mingled confusedly, came in a whirl of foam, rushing upon the stone barricade like chaos upon a mountain, where it stopped. Here the fragments lay together, a mass of beams penetrable by the waves, but still breaking their force. The conquered barrier struggled nobly against destruction. The waves had shattered it, and in their turn were shattered against it. Though overthrown, it still remained in some degree effective. The rock which barred its passage, an immovable obstacle, held it fast. The defile, as I have said, was very narrow at that point; the victorious whirlwind had driven forward, mingled and piled up the wreck of the breakwater in this narrow pass. The very violence of the assault, by heaping up the mass and driving the broken ends one into the other, had contributed to make the pile firm. It was destroyed, but immovable. A few pieces of timber only were swept away, and dispersed by the waves. One passed through the air and very near to Gil-

liatt. He felt the counter-current upon his forehead.

Some waves, however, of that kind, which in great tempests return with an imperturbable regularity, swept over the ruins of the breakwater. They fell into the defile, and, in spite of the many angles of the passage, set the waters within in commotion. The waters began to roll through the gorge ominously. The mysterious embraces of the waves among the rocks were audible.

What means were there of preventing this agitation extending as far as the sloop? It would not require a long time for the blasts of wind to create a tempest through all the windings of the pass. A few heavy seas would be sufficient to stave in the sloop, and scatter her burden.

Gilliatt shuddered as he reflected.

But he was not disconcerted. No defeat could daunt his soul.

The hurricane had now discovered the true plan of attack, and was rushing fiercely between the two walls of the strait.

Suddenly a crash was heard, resounding and prolonging itself through the defile at some distance behind him—a crash more terrible than any he had yet heard.

It came from the direction of the sloop.

Something disastrous was happening there.

Gilliatt hastened towards it.

From the eastern gullet where he was, he could not see the sloop on account of the sharp turns of the pass. At the last turn, he stopped and waited for the lightning.

The first flash revealed to him the position of affairs.

The rush of the sea through the eastern entrance had been met by a blast of wind from the other end. A disaster was near at hand.

The sloop had received no visible damage; anchored as she was, the storm had little power over her, but the carcass of the *Durande* was distressed.

In such a tempest, the wreck presented a considerable surface. It was entirely out of the sea in the air, exposed. The breach which Gilliatt had made, and which he had passed the engine through, had rendered the hull still weaker. The keelson was snapped, the vertebral column of the skeleton was broken.

The hurricane had passed over it. Scarcely more than this was needed to complete its destruction. The planking of the deck had bent like an opened book. The dismemberment had begun. It was the noise of this dislocation which had reached Gilliatt's ears in the midst of the tempest.

The disaster which presented itself as he approached appeared almost irremediable.

The square opening which he had cut in the keel had become a gaping wound. The wind had converted the smooth-cut hole into a ragged fracture. This transverse breach separated the wreck in two. The after-part, nearest to the sloop, had remained firm in its bed of rocks.



The forward portion which faced him was hanging. A fracture, while it holds, is a sort of hinge. The whole mass oscillated, as the wind moved it, with a doleful noise. Fortunately, the sloop was no longer beneath it.

But this swinging movement shook the other portion of the hull, still wedged and immovable as it was between the two *Douvres*. From shaking to casting down the distance is not far. Under the obstinate assaults of the gale, the dislocated part might suddenly carry away the other portion, which almost touched the sloop. In this case, the whole wreck, together with the sloop and the engine, must be swept into the sea and swallowed up.

All this presented itself to his eyes. It was the end of all. How could it be prevented?

Gilliatt was one of those who are accustomed to snatch the means of safety out of danger itself. He collected his ideas for a moment. Then he hastened to his arsenal, and brought his hatchet.

The mallet had served him well; it was now the turn of the axe.

He mounted upon the wreck, got a footing on that part of the planking which had not given way, and leaning over the precipice of the pass between the *Douvres*, he began to cut away the broken joists and the planking which supported the hanging portion of the hull.

His object was to effect the separation of the two parts of the wreck, to disencumber the half which remained firm, to throw overboard what the waves had seized, and thus share the prey with storm. The hanging portion of the wreck, borne down by the wind and by its own weight, adhered only at one or two points. The entire wreck resembled a folding screen, one leaf of which, half hanging, beat against the other. Five or six pieces of the planking only, bent and started, but not broken, still held. Their fractures creaked and enlarged at every gust, and the axe, so to speak, had but to help the labour of the wind. This more than half-severed condition, while it increased the facility of the work, also rendered it dangerous. The whole might give way beneath him at any moment.

The tempest had reached its highest point. The convulsion of the sea reached the heavens. Hitherto the storm had been supreme; it had seemed to work its own imperious will, to give the impulse, to drive the waves to frenzy while still preserving a sort of sinister lucidity. Below was fury, above anger. The heavens are the breath, the ocean only foam, hence the authority of the wind. But the intoxication of its own horrors had troubled it. It had become a mere whirlwind—it was a blindness leading to night. There are times when tempests become frenzied, when the heavens are attacked with a sort of delirium, when the firmament raves and hurls its lightnings blindly. No terror is greater than this. It is a hideous moment. The trembling of the rock was at its height. Every storm has a mysterious course, but now it loses its appointed path. It is the most dangerous

point of the tempest. "At that moment," says Thomas Fuller, "the wind is a furious maniac." It is at that instant that that continuous discharge of electricity takes place which Piddington calls "the cascade of lightnings." It is at that instant that in the blackest spot of the clouds (none know why, unless it be to spy the universal terror) a circle of blue light appears, which the Spanish sailors of ancient times called the eye of the tempest, *el ojo de la tempestad*. That terrible eye looked down upon Gilliatt.

Gilliatt, on his part, was surveying the heavens. He raised his head now. After every stroke of his hatchet he stood erect, and gazed upwards almost haughtily. He was, or seemed to be, too near destruction not to feel self-sustained. Would he despair? No! In the presence of the wildest fury of the ocean he was watchful as well as bold. He planted his feet only where the wreck was firm. He ventured his life and yet was careful; for his determined spirit, too, had reached its highest point. His strength had grown tenfold greater. He had become heated with his own intrepidity. The strokes of his hatchet were like blows of defiance. He seemed to have gained in directness what the tempest had lost. A pathetic struggle! On the one hand, an indefatigable will; on the other, inexhaustible power. It was a contest with the elements for the prize at his feet. The clouds took the shape of Gorgon masks in the immensity of the heavens; every possible form of terror appeared: the rain came from the sea, the surf from the cloud; phantoms of the wind bent down; meteoric faces revealed themselves, and were again eclipsed, leaving the darkness more monstrous: then there was nothing felt but the torrents coming from all sides—a boiling sea; cumuli heavy with hail, ashen-hued, ragged-edged, appeared seized with a sort of whirling frenzy; strange rattlings filled the air; the inverse currents of electricity observed by Volta darted their sudden flashes from cloud to cloud. The prolongation of the lightnings was terrible; the flashes passed near to Gilliatt. The very ocean seemed astonished. He passed to and fro upon the tottering wreck, making the deck tremble under his steps, striking, cutting, hacking with the hatchet in his hand, pallid in the gleam of the lightning, his long hair streaming, his feet naked, in rags, his face covered with the foam of the sea, grand still amid that maelstrom of the thunder-storm.

Against these furious powers man has no weapon but his invention. Invention was Gilliatt's triumph. His object was to allow all the dislocated portions of the wreck to fall together. For this reason he cut away the broken parts without entirely separating them, leaving some parts on which they still swung. Suddenly he stopped, holding his axe in the air. The operation was complete. The entire portion went with a crash.

The mass rolled down between the two *Douvres*, just below Gilliatt, who stood upon the wreck, leaning over and observing the fall. It

fell perpendicularly into the water, struck the rocks, and stopped in the defile before touching the bottom. Enough remained out of the water to rise more than twelve feet above the waves. The vertical mass of planking formed a wall between the two Doudres; like the rock overturned crosswise higher up the defile, it allowed only a slight stream of foam to pass through at its two extremities, and thus was a fifth barricade improvised by Gilliatt against the tempest in that passage of the seas.

The hurricane itself, in its blind fury, had assisted in the construction of this last barrier.

It was fortunate that the proximity of the two walls had prevented the mass of wreck from falling to the bottom. This circumstance gave the barricade greater height; the water, besides, could flow under the obstacle, which diminished the power of the waves. That which passes below can not pass over. This is partly the secret of the floating breakwater.

Henceforth, let the storm do what it might, there was nothing to fear for the sloop or the machinery. The water around them could not become agitated again. Between the barrier of the Doudres, which covered them on the west, and the barricade which protected them from the east, no heavy sea or wind could reach them.

Gilliatt had plucked safety out of the catastrophe itself. The storm had been his fellow-labourer in the work.

This done, he took a little water in the palm of his hand from one of the rain-pools, and drank; and then, looking upward at the storm, said, with a smile, "Bungler!"

Human intelligence combating with brute force experiences an ironical joy in demonstrating the stupidity of its antagonist, and compelling it to serve the very objects of its fury, and Gilliatt felt something of that immemorial desire to insult his invisible enemy, which is as old as the heroes of the Iliad.

He descended to the sloop, and examined it by the gleam of the lightning. The relief which he had been able to give to his distressed bark was well-timed. She had been much shaken

during the last hour, and had begun to give way. A hasty glance revealed no serious injury. Nevertheless, he was certain that the vessel had been subjected to violent shocks. As soon as the waves had subsided, the hull had righted itself; the anchors had held fast; as to the machine, the four chains had supported it admirably.

While Gilliatt was completing this survey, something white passed before his eyes and vanished in the gloom. It was a sea-mew.

No sight could be more welcome in tempestuous weather. When the birds reappear, the storm is departing. The thunder redoubled—another good sign.

The violent efforts of the storm had broken its force. All mariners know that the last ordeal is severe, but short. The excessive violence of the thunder-storm is the herald of the end.

The rain stopped suddenly. Then there was only a surly rumbling in the heavens. The storm ceased with the suddenness of a plank falling to the ground. The immense mass of clouds became disorganized. A strip of clear sky appeared between them. Gilliatt was astonished—it was broad daylight.

The tempest had lasted nearly twenty hours.

The wind which had brought the storm carried it away. A dark pile was diffused over the horizon; the broken clouds were flying in confusion across the sky. From one end to the other of the line there was a movement of retreat; a long muttering was heard, gradually decreasing, a few last drops of rain fell, and all those dark masses charged with thunder departed like a terrible multitude of chariots.

Suddenly the wide expanse of sky became blue.

Gilliatt perceived that he was wearied. Sleep swooped down upon the exhausted frame like a bird upon its prey. He drooped, and sank upon the deck of the bark without choosing his position, and there slept. Stretched at length and inert, he remained thus for some hours, scarcely distinguishable from the beams and joists among which he lay.

## BOOK IV.

### PITFALLS IN THE WAY.

#### I.

##### HE WHO IS HUNGRY IS NOT ALONE.

WHEN he awakened he was hungry.

The sea was growing calmer; but there was still a heavy swell, which made his departure, for the present at least, impossible. The day, too, was far advanced. For the sloop, with its burden, to get to Guernsey before midnight, it was necessary to start in the morning.

Although pressed by hunger, Gilliatt began

by stripping himself, the only means of getting warmth. His clothing was saturated by the storm, but the rain had washed out the seawater, which rendered it possible to dry them.

He kept nothing on but his trowsers, which he turned up nearly to the knees.

His overcoat, jacket, overalls, and sheepskin he spread out and fixed with large round stones here and there.

Then he thought of eating.

He had recourse to his knife, which he was



careful to sharpen, and to keep always in good condition, and he detached from the rocks a few limpets, similar in kind to the *clonisses* of the Mediterranean. It is well known that these are eaten raw; but, after so many labours, so various and so rude, the pittance was meagre. His biscuit was gone; but of water he had now abundance.

He took advantage of the receding tide to wander among the rocks in search of cray-fish. There was extent enough of rock to hope for a successful search.

But he had not reflected that he could do nothing with these without fire to cook them. If he had taken the trouble to go to his store-cavern, he would have found it inundated with the rain. His wood and coal were drowned, and of his store of tow, which served him for tinder, there was not a fibre which was not saturated. No means remained of lighting a fire.

For the rest, his blower was completely disorganized. The screen of the hearth of his forge was broken down; the storm had sacked and devastated his workshop. With what tools and apparatus had escaped the general wreck, he could still have done carpentry work, but he could not have accomplished any of the labours of the smith. Gilliatt, however, never thought of his workshop for a moment.

Drawn in another direction by the pangs of hunger, he had pursued without much reflection his search for food. He wandered, not in the gorge of the rocks, but outside, among the smaller breakers. It was there that the Durande, ten weeks previously, had first struck upon the sunken reef.

For the search that Gilliatt was prosecuting, this part was more favourable than the interior. At low water the crabs are accustomed to crawl out into the air. They seem to like to warm themselves in the sun, where they swarm sometimes to the disgust of loiterers, who recognise in these creatures, with their awkward sidelong gait, climbing clumsily from crack to crack the lower stages of the rocks like the steps of a staircase, a sort of sea vermin.

For two months Gilliatt had lived upon these vermin of the sea.

On this day, however, the cray-fish and crabs were both wanting. The tempest had driven them into their solitary retreats, and they had not yet mustered courage to venture abroad. Gilliatt held his open knife in his hand, and from time to time scraped a cockle from under the bunches of seaweed, which he ate while still walking.

He could not have been far from the very spot where Sieur Clubin had perished.

As Gilliatt was determining to content himself with the sea-urchins and the *châtaignes de mer*, a little clattering noise at his feet aroused his attention. A large crab, startled by his approach, had just dropped into a pool. The water was shallow, and he did not lose sight of it.

He chased the crab along the base of the rock; the crab moved fast.

Suddenly it was gone.

It had buried itself in some crevice under the rock.

Gilliatt clutched the projections of the rock, and stretched out to observe where it shelved away under the water.

As he suspected, there was an opening there in which the creature had evidently taken refuge. It was more than a crevice—it was a kind of porch.

The sea entered beneath it, but was not deep. The bottom was visible, covered with large pebbles. The pebbles were green and clothed with *conferva*, indicating that they were never dry. They were like the tops of a number of heads of infants, covered with a kind of green hair.

Holding his knife between his teeth, Gilliatt descended, by the help of feet and hands, from the upper part of the escarpment, and leaped into the water. It reached almost to his shoulders.

He made his way through the porch, and found himself in a blind passage, with a roof in the form of a rude arch over his head. The walls were polished and slippery. The crab was nowhere visible. He gained his feet and advanced in daylight growing fainter, so that he began to lose the power to distinguish objects.

At about fifteen paces, the vaulted roof ended overhead. He had penetrated beyond the blind passage. There was here more space, and consequently more daylight. The pupils of his eyes, moreover, had dilated; he could see pretty clearly. He was taken by surprise.

He had made his way again into the singular cavern which he had visited in the previous month. The only difference was that he had entered by the way of the sea.

It was through the submarine arch that he had remarked before that he had just entered. At certain low tides it was accessible.

His eyes became more accustomed to the place. His vision became clearer and clearer. He was astonished. He found himself again in that extraordinary palace of shadows; saw again before his eyes that vaulted roof, those columns, those purple and blood-like stains, that vegetation rich with gems, and, at the farther end, that crypt or sanctuary, and that altar-like stone. He took little notice of these details, but their impression was in his mind, and he saw that the place was unchanged.

He observed before him, at a certain height in the wall, the crevice through which he had penetrated the first time, and which, from the point where he now stood, appeared inaccessible.

Near the moulded arch, he remarked those low dark grottoes—a sort of caves within the cavern—which he had already observed from a distance. He now stood nearer to them. The entrance to the nearest to him was out of the water, and easily approachable. Nearer still than this recess he noticed, above the level of the water, and within reach of his hand, a horizontal fissure. It seemed to him probable that

the crab had taken refuge there, and he plunged his hand in as far as he was able, and groped about in that dusky aperture.

Suddenly he felt himself seized by the arm. A strange indescribable horror thrilled through him.

Some living thing—thin, rough, flat, cold, slimy—had twisted itself round his naked arm, in the dark depth below. It crept upward towards his chest. Its pressure was like a tightening cord, its steady persistence like that of a screw. In less than a moment some mysterious spiral form had passed round his wrist and elbow, and had reached his shoulder. A sharp point penetrated beneath the arm-pit.

Gilliat recoiled; but he had scarcely power to move! He was, as it were, nailed to the place. With his left hand, which was disengaged, he seized his knife, which he still held between his teeth, and with that hand, holding the knife, he supported himself against the rocks, while he made a desperate effort to withdraw his arm. He succeeded in only disturbing his persecutor, which wound itself still tighter. It was supple as leather, strong as steel, cold as night.

A second form—sharp, elongated, and narrow—issued out of the crevice, like a tongue out of monstrous jaws. It seemed to lick his naked body. Then, suddenly stretching out, became longer and thinner, as it crept over his skin, and wound itself round him. At the same time a terrible sense of pain, comparable to nothing he had ever known, compelled all his muscles to contract. He felt upon his skin a number of flat rounded points. It seemed as if innumerable suckers had fastened to his flesh and were about to drink his blood.

A third long undulating shape issued from the hole in the rock; seemed to feel its way about his body; lashed round his ribs like a cord, and fixed itself there.

Agony when at its height is mute. Gilliat uttered no cry. There was sufficient light for him to see the repulsive forms which had entangled themselves about him. A fourth ligature, but this one, swift as an arrow, darted towards his stomach, and wound around him there.

It was impossible to sever or tear away the slimy bands which were twisted tightly round his body, and were adhering by a number of points. Each of the points was the focus of frightful and singular pangs. It was as if numberless small mouths were devouring him at the same time.

A fifth long, slimy, riband-shaped strip issued from the hole. It passed over the others, and wound itself tightly around his chest. The compression increased his sufferings. He could scarcely breathe.

These living thongs were pointed at their extremities, but broadened like the blade of a sword towards its hilt. All belonged evidently to the same centre. They crept and glided about him; he felt the strange points of press-

ure, which seemed to him like months, change their places from time to time.

Suddenly a large, round, flattened, glutinous mass issued from beneath the crevice. It was the centre; the five thongs were attached to it like spokes to the nave of a wheel. On the opposite side of this disgusting monster appeared the commencement of three other tentacles, the ends of which remained under the rock. In the middle of this slimy mass appeared two eyes.

The eyes were fixed on Gilliat.

He recognised the Devil-fish.

## II.

### THE MONSTER.

It is difficult for those who have not seen it to believe the existence of the devil-fish.

Compared to this creature, the ancient hydras are insignificant.

At times we are tempted to imagine that the vague forms which float in our dreams may encounter in the realm of the Possible attractive forces, having power to fix their lineaments and shape living beings out of these creatures of our slumbers. The Unknown has power over these strange visions, and out of them composes monsters. Orpheus, Homer, and Hesiod imagined only the Chimera: Providence has created this terrible creature of the sea.

Creation abounds in monstrous forms of life. The wherefore of this perplexes and affrights the religious thinker.

If terror were the object of its creation, nothing could be imagined more perfect than the devil-fish.

The whale has enormous bulk, the devil-fish is comparatively small; the jararaca makes a hissing noise, the devil-fish is mute; the rhinoceros has a horn, the devil-fish has none; the scorpion has a dart, the devil-fish has no dart; the shark has sharp fins, the devil-fish has no fins; the vespertilio-vampyre has wings with claws, the devil-fish has no wings; the porcupine has his spines, the devil-fish has no spines; the sword-fish has his sword, the devil-fish has none; the torpedo has its electric spark, the devil-fish has none; the toad has its poison, the devil-fish has none; the viper has its venom, the devil-fish has no venom; the lion has its talons, the devil-fish has no talons; the griffon has its beak, the devil-fish has no beak; the crocodile has its jaws, the devil-fish has no teeth.

The devil-fish has no muscular organization, no menacing cry, no breastplate, no horn, no dart, no claw, no tail with which to hold or bruise; no cutting fins, or wings with nails; no prickles, no sword, no electric discharge, no poison, no talons, no beak, no teeth, yet he is, of all creatures, the most formidably armed.

What, then, is the devil-fish? It is the sea vampyre.

The swimmer who, attracted by the beauty of the spot, ventures among breakers in the open



sea, where the still waters hide the splendours of the deep, in the hollows of unfrequented rocks, in unknown caverns abounding in sea-plants, testacea, and crustacea, under the deep portals of the ocean, runs the risk of meeting it. If that fate should be yours, be not curious, but fly. The intruder enters there dazzled, but quits the spot in terror.

This frightful apparition, which is always possible among the rocks in the open sea, is a grayish form, which undulates in the water. It is the thickness of a man's arm, and in length nearly five feet. Its outline is ragged. Its form resembles an umbrella closed, and without handle. This irregular mass advances slowly towards you. Suddenly it opens, and eight radii issue abruptly from around a face with two eyes. These radii are alive; their undulation is like lambent flames; they resemble, when opened, the spokes of a wheel of four or five feet in diameter. A terrible expansion! It springs upon its prey.

The devil-fish harpoons its victim.

It winds around the sufferer, covering and entangling him in its long folds. Underneath, it is yellow; above, a dull, earthy hue. Nothing could render that inexplicable shade dust-coloured. Its form is spider-like, but its tints are like those of the chameleon. When irritated, it becomes violet. Its most horrible characteristic is its softness.

Its folds strangle, its contact paralyzes.

It has an aspect like gangrened or scabrous flesh. It is a monstrous embodiment of disease.

It adheres closely to its prey, and cannot be torn away—a fact which is due to its power of exhausting air. The eight antennæ, large at their roots, diminish gradually, and end in needle-like points. Underneath each of these feelers range two rows of pustules, decreasing in size, the largest ones near the head, the smaller at the extremities. Each row contains twenty-five of these. There are, therefore, fifty pustules to each feeler, and the creature possesses, in the whole, four hundred. These pustules are capable of acting like cupping-glasses. They are cartilaginous substances, cylindrical, horny, and livid. Upon the large species they diminish gradually from the diameter of a five-franc piece to the size of a split pea. These small tubes can be thrust out and withdrawn by the animal at will. They are capable of piercing to a depth of more than an inch.

This sucking apparatus has all the regularity and delicacy of a key-board. It stands forth at one moment, and disappears the next. The most perfect sensitiveness cannot equal the contractibility of these suckers, always proportioned to the internal movement of the animal and its exterior circumstances. The monster is endowed with the qualities of the sensitive plant.

This animal is the same as those which mariners call Poulps; which science designates Cephalopteræ, and which ancient legends call Krakens. It is the English sailors who call

them "Devil-fish," and sometimes Bloodsuckers. In the Channel Islands they are called *pieuvres*.

They are rare at Guernsey, very small at Jersey; but near the island of Sark are numerous as well as very large.

An engraving in Sonnini's edition of Buffon represents a Cephaloptera crushing a frigate. Denis Montfort, in fact, considers the Poulp, or Octopod, of high latitudes, strong enough to destroy a ship. Bory Saint Vincent doubts this; but he shows that in our regions they will attack men. Near Brecq-Hou, in Sark, they show a cave where a devil-fish, a few years since, seized and drowned a lobster-fisher. Peron and Lamarck are in error in their belief that the "poulp," having no fins, cannot swim. He who writes these lines has seen with his own eyes at Sark, in the cavern called the Boutiques, a pieuvre swimming and pursuing a bather. When captured and killed, this specimen was found to be four English feet broad, and it was possible to count its four hundred suckers. The monster thrust them out convulsively in the agony of death.

According to Denis Montfort, one of those observers whose marvellous intuition sinks or raises them to the level of magicians, the poulp is almost endowed with the passions of man: it has its hatreds. In fact, in the Absolute, to be hideous is to hate.

Hideousness struggles under the natural law of elimination, which necessarily renders it hostile.

When swimming, the devil-fish rests, so to speak, in its sheath. It swims with all its parts drawn close. It may be likened to a sleeve sewn up with a closed fist within. The protuberance, which is the head, pushes the water aside, and advances with a vague undulatory movement. Its two eyes, though large, are indistinct, being of the colour of the water.

When in ambush, or seeking its prey, it retires into itself, grows smaller and condenses itself. It is then scarcely distinguishable in the submarine twilight.

At such times it looks like a mere ripple in the water. It resembles anything except a living creature.

The devil-fish is crafty. When its victim is unsuspecting, it opens suddenly.

A glutinous mass, endowed with a malignant will; what can be more horrible?

It is in the most beautiful azure depths of the limpid water that this hideous, voracious polyp delights. It always conceals itself, a fact which increases its terrible associations. When they are seen, it is almost invariably after they have been captured.

At night, however, and particularly in the hot season, it becomes phosphorescent. These horrible creatures have their passions—their submarine nuptials. Then it adorns itself, burns and illumines; and from the height of some rock it may be seen in the deep obscurity

of the waves below, expanding with a pale irradiation—a spectral sun.

The devil-fish not only swims—it walks. It is partly fish, partly a reptile. It crawls upon the bed of the sea. At these times it makes use of its eight feelers, and creeps along in the fashion of a species of swift-moving caterpillar.

It has no blood, no bones, no flesh. It is soft and flabby—a skin with nothing inside. Its eight tentacles may be turned inside out like the fingers of a glove.

It has a single orifice in the centre of its radii, which appears at first to be neither the vent nor the mouth. It is, in fact, both one and the other. The orifice performs a double function. The entire creature is cold.

The jelly-fish of the Mediterranean is repulsive. Contact with that animated gelatinous substance, which envelopes the bather, in which the hands sink in, and the nails scratch ineffectively; which can be torn without killing it, and which can be plucked off without entirely removing it—that fluid and yet tenacious creature, which slips through the fingers, is disgusting; but no horror can equal the sudden apparition of the devil-fish, that Medusa with its eight serpents.

No grasp can equal the sudden strain of the cephaloptera.

It is with the sucking apparatus that it attacks. The victim is oppressed by a vacuum drawing at numberless points: it is not a clawing or a biting, but an indescribable scarification. A tearing of the flesh is terrible, but less terrible than a sucking of the blood. Claws are harmless compared with the horrible action of these natural air-cups. The talons of the wild beast enter into your flesh; but with the cephaloptera it is you who enter into the creature. The muscles swell, the fibres of the body are contorted, the skin cracks under the loathsome oppression, the blood spurts out and mingles horribly with the lymph of the monster, which clings to its victim by innumerable hideous mouths. The hydra incorporates itself with the man; the man becomes one with the hydra. The spectre lies upon you: the tiger can only devour you; the devil-fish, horrible, sucks your life-blood away. He draws you to him, and into himself; while bound down, glued to the ground, powerless, you feel yourself gradually emptied into this horrible pouch, which is the monster.

These strange animals, Science, in accordance with its habit of excessive caution, even in the face of facts, at first rejects as fabulous; then she decides to observe them; then she dissects, classifies, catalogues, and labels; then procures specimens, and exhibits them in glass cases in museums. They enter then into her nomenclature; are designated mollusks, invertebrata, radiata: she determines their position in the animal world a little above the calamaries, a little below the cuttle-fish; she finds for these hydras of the sea an analogous creature in fresh water called the argyronecte; she di-

vides them into great, medium, and small kinds; she admits more readily the existence of the small than of the large species, which is, however, the tendency of science in all countries, for she is by nature more microscopic than telescopic. She regards them from the point of view of their construction, and calls them Cephaloptera; counts their antennæ, and calls them Octopodes. This done, she leaves them. Where science drops them, philosophy takes them up.

Philosophy, in her turn, studies these creatures. She goes both less far and further. She does not dissect, but meditate. Where the scalpel has laboured, she plunges the hypothesis. She seeks the final cause. Eternal perplexity of the thinker. These creatures disturb his ideas of the Creator. They are hideous surprises. They are the death's-head at the feast of contemplation. The philosopher determines their characteristics in dread. They are the concrete forms of evil. What attitude can he take towards this treason of creation against herself? To whom can he look for the solution of these riddles? The Possible is a terrible matrix. Monsters are mysteries in their concrete form. Portions of shade issue from the mass, and something within detaches itself, rolls, floats, condenses, borrows elements from the ambient darkness, becomes subject to unknown polarizations, assumes a kind of life, furnishes itself with some unimagined form from the obscurity, and with some terrible spirit from the miasma, and wanders ghostlike among living things. It is as if night itself assumed the forms of animals. But for what good? with what object? Thus we come again to the eternal questioning.

These animals are indeed phantoms as much as monsters. They are proved and improbable. Their fate is to exist in spite of *a priori* reasonings. They are the amphibia of the shore which separates life from death. Their unreality makes their existence puzzling. They touch the frontier of man's domain and people the region of chimeras. We deny the possibility of the vampire, and the cephaloptera appears. Their swarming is a certainty which disconcerts our confidence. Optimism, which is nevertheless in the right, becomes silenced in their presence. They form the visible extremity of the dark circles. They mark the transition of our reality into another. They seem to belong to that commencement of terrible life which the dreamer sees confusedly through the loophole of the night.

That multiplication of monsters, first in the Invisible, then in the Possible, has been suspected, perhaps perceived by magi and philosophers in their austere ecstasies and profound contemplations. Hence the conjecture of a material hell. The demon is simply the invisible tiger. The wild beast which devours souls has been presented to the eyes of human beings by St. John, and by Dante in his vision of Hell.



If, in truth, the invisible circles of creation continue indefinitely, if after one there is yet another, and so forth in illimitable progression; if that chain, which for our part we are resolved to doubt, really exist, the cephaloptera at one extremity proves Satan at the other. It is certain that the wrong-doer at one end proves the existence of wrong at the other.

Every malignant creature, like every perverted intelligence, is a sphinx. A terrible sphinx propounding a terrible riddle—the riddle of the existence of Evil.

It is this perfection of evil which has sometimes sufficed to incline powerful intellects to a faith in the duality of the Deity, towards that terrible bifrons of the Manichæans.

A piece of silk stolen during the last war from the palace of the Emperor of China represents a shark eating a crocodile, who is eating a serpent, who is devouring an eagle, who is preying on a swallow, who in his turn is eating a caterpillar.

All nature which is under our observation is thus alternately devouring and devoured. The prey prey on each other.

Learned men, however, who are also philosophers, and therefore optimists in their view of creation, find, or believe they find, an explanation. Among others, Bonnet of Geneva, that mysterious exact thinker, who was opposed to Buffon, as in later times Geoffroy St. Hilaire has been to Cuvier, was struck with the idea of the final object. His notions may be summed up thus: universal death necessitates universal sepulture; the devourers are the sextons of the system of nature. All created things enter into and form the elements of other. To decay is to nourish. Such is the terrible law from which not even man himself escapes.

In our world of twilight this fatal order of things produces monsters. You ask for what purpose. We find the solution here.

But is this the solution? Is this the answer to our questionings? And if so, why not some different order of things? Thus the question returns.

Let us live: be it so.

But let us endeavour that death shall be progress. Let us aspire to an existence in which these mysteries shall be made clear. Let us follow that conscience which leads us thither.

For let us never forget that the highest is only attained through the high.

### III.

#### ANOTHER KIND OF SEA-COMBAT.

SUCH was the creature in whose power Gilliatt had fallen for some minutes.

The monster was the inhabitant of the grotto—the terrible genii of the place. A kind of sombre demon of the water.

All the splendours of the cavern existed for it alone.

On the day of the previous month when Gilliatt had first penetrated into the grotto, the dark outline, vaguely perceived by him in the ripples of the secret waters, was this monster. It was here in its home.

When, entering for the second time into the cavern in pursuit of the crab, he had observed the crevice in which he supposed that the crab had taken refuge, the *pieuvre* was there lying in wait for prey.

Is it possible to imagine that secret ambush?

No bird would brood, no egg would burst to life, no flower would dare to open, no breast to give milk, no heart to love, no spirit to soar, under the influence of that apparition of evil watching with sinister patience in the dusk.

Gilliatt had thrust his arm deep into the opening; the monster had snapped at it. It held him fast, as the spider holds the fly.

He was in the water up to his belt; his naked feet clenching the slippery roundness of the huge stones at the bottom; his right arm bound and rendered powerless by the flat coils of the long tentacles of the creature, and his body almost hidden under the folds and cross folds of this horrible bandage.

Of the eight arms of the devil-fish, three adhered to the rock, while five encircled Gilliatt. In this way, clinging to the granite on the one hand, and on the other to its human prey, it enchained him to the rock. Two hundred and fifty suckers were upon him, tormenting him with agony and loathing. He was grasped by gigantic hands, the fingers of which were each nearly a yard long, and furnished inside with living blisters eating into the flesh.

As we have said, it is impossible to tear one's self from the folds of the devil-fish. The attempt ends only in a firmer grasp. The monster clings with more determined force. Its effort increases with that of his victim; every struggle produces a tightening of his ligatures.

Gilliatt had but one resource, his knife.

His left hand only was free, but the reader knows with what power he could use it. It might have been said that he had two right hands.

His open knife was in this hand.

The antenna of the devil-fish cannot be cut; it is a leathery substance, impossible to divide with the knife; it slips under the edge; its position in attack also is such, that to cut it would be to wound the victim's own flesh.

The creature is formidable, but there is a way of resisting it. The fishermen of Sark know this, as does any one who has seen them execute certain abrupt movements in the sea. The porpoises know it also; they have a way of biting the cuttle-fish which decapitates it. Hence the frequent sight on the sea of pen-fish, poulps, and cuttle-fish without heads.

The cephaloptera, in fact, is only vulnerable through the head.

Gilliatt was not ignorant of this fact.

He had never seen a devil-fish of this size. His first encounter was with one of the larger

species. Another would have been powerless with terror.

With the devil-fish, as with a furious bull, there is a certain moment in the conflict which must be seized. It is the instant when the bull lowers the neck; it is the instant when the devil-fish advances its head. The movement is rapid. He who loses that moment is destroyed.

The things we have described occupied only a few moments. Gilliatt, however, felt the increasing power of its innumerable suckers.

The monster is cunning; it tries first to stupefy its prey. It seizes, and then pauses awhile.

Gilliatt grasped his knife; the sucking increased.

He looked at the monster, which seemed to look at him.

Suddenly it loosened from the rock its sixth antenna, and, darting it at him, seized him by the left arm.

At the same moment it advanced its head with a violent movement. In one second more its mouth would have fastened on his breast. Bleeding in the sides, and with his two arms entangled, he would have been a dead man.

But Gilliatt was watchful. He avoided the antenna, and at the moment when the monster darted forward to fasten on his breast, he struck it with the knife clenched in his left hand. There were two convulsions in opposite directions—that of the devil-fish and that of its prey. The movement was rapid as a double flash of lightning.

He had plunged the blade of his knife into the flat, slimy substance, and by a rapid movement, like the flourish of a whip in the air, describing a circle round the two eyes, he wrenched the head off as a man would draw a tooth.

The struggle was ended. The folds relaxed. The monster dropped away, like the slow detaching of hands. The four hundred suckers, deprived of their sustaining power, dropped at once from the man and the rock. The mass sank to the bottom of the water.

Breathless with the struggle, Gilliatt could perceive upon the stones at his feet two shapeless, slimy heaps, the head on one side, the remainder of the monster on the other.

Fearing, nevertheless, some convulsive return of his agony, he recoiled to avoid the reach of the dreaded tentacles.

But the monster was quite dead.

Gilliatt closed his knife.

#### IV.

##### NOTHING IS HIDDEN, NOTHING LOST.

It was time that he killed the devil-fish. He was almost suffocated. His right arm and his chest were purple. Numberless little swellings were distinguishable upon them; the blood flowed from them here and there. The remedy for

these wounds is sea-water. Gilliatt plunged into it, rubbing himself at the same time with the palms of his hands. The swellings disappeared under the friction.

By stepping further into the waters, he had, without perceiving it, approached to the species of recess already observed by him near the crevice where he had been attacked by the devil-fish.

This recess stretched obliquely under the great walls of the cavern, and was dry. The large pebbles which had become heaped up there had raised the bottom above the level of ordinary tides. The entrance was a rather large, elliptical arch; a man could enter by stooping. The green light of the submarine grotto penetrated into it, and lighted it feebly.

It happened that, while hastily rubbing his skin, Gilliatt raised his eyes mechanically.

He was able to see far into the cavern.

He shuddered.

He fancied that he perceived, in the furthest depth of the dusky recess, something smiling.

Gilliatt had never heard the word "hallucination," but he was familiar with the idea. Those mysterious encounters with the invisible, which, for the sake of avoiding the difficulty of explaining them, we call hallucinations, are in nature. Illusions or realities, visions are a fact. He who has the gift will see them. Gilliatt, as we have said, was a dreamer. He had, at times, the faculty of a seer. It was not in vain that he had spent his days in musing among solitary places.

He imagined himself the dupe of one of those mirages which he had more than once beheld when in his dreamy moods.

The opening was somewhat in the shape of a chalk-burner's oven. It was a low niche, with projections like basket-handles. Its abrupt groins contracted gradually as far as the extremity of the crypt, where the heaps of round stones and the rocky roof joined.

Gilliatt entered, and, lowering his head, advanced towards the object in the distance.

There was, indeed, something smiling.

It was a death's head; but it was not only the head. There was the entire skeleton. A complete human skeleton was lying in the cavern.

In such a position, a bold man will continue his researches.

Gilliatt cast his eyes around. He was surrounded by a multitude of crabs. The multitude did not stir. They were but empty shells.

These groups were scattered here and there among the masses of pebbles, in irregular constellations.

Gilliatt, having his eyes fixed elsewhere, had walked among them without perceiving them.

At the extremity of the crypt, where he had now penetrated, there was a still greater heap of remains. It was a confused mass of legs, antennae, and mandibles. Claws stood wide open; bony shells lay still under their bristling prickles: some reversed showed their livid hollows. The heap was like a *mêlée* of besiegers who had fallen, and lay massed together.



The skeleton was partly buried in this heap.

Under the confused mass of scales and tentacles, the eye perceived the cranium with its furrows, the vertebræ, the thigh bones, the tibiae, and the long-jointed finger-bones with their nails. The frame of the ribs was filled with crabs. Some heart had once beat there. The green mould of the sea had settled round the sockets of the eyes. Limpets had left their slime upon the bony nostrils. For the rest, there were net in this cave within the rocks either sea-gulls, or weeds, or a breath of air. All was still. The teeth grinned.

The sombre side of laughter is that strange mockery of its expression which is peculiar to a human skull.

This marvellous palace of the deep, inlaid and incrustated with all the gems of the sea, had at length revealed and told its secret. It was a savage haunt; the devil-fish inhabited it; it was also a tomb, in which the body of a man reposed.

The skeleton and the creatures around it oscillated vaguely in the reflections of the subterranean water which trembled upon the roof and wall. The horrible multitude of crabs looked as if finishing their repast. These crustacea seemed to be devouring the carcass. Nothing could be more strange than the aspect of the dead vermin upon their dead prey.

Gilliatt had beneath his eyes the storehouse of the devil-fish.

It was a dismal sight. The crabs had devoured the man, the devil-fish had devoured the crabs.

There were no remains of clothing anywhere visible. The man must have been seized naked.

Gilliatt, attentively examining, began to remove the shells from the skeleton. What had this man been? The body was admirably dissected; it looked as if prepared for the study of its anatomy; all the flesh was stripped; not a muscle remained; not a bone was missing. If Gilliatt had been learned in science, he might have demonstrated the fact. The periosteæ, denuded of their covering, were white and smooth, as if they had been polished. But for some green mould of sea-mosses here and there, they would have been like ivory. The cartilaginous divisions were delicately inlaid and arranged. The tomb sometimes produces this dismal mosaic work.

The body was, as it were, interred under the heap of dead crabs. Gilliatt disinterred it.

Suddenly he stooped, and examined more closely.

He had perceived around the vertebral column a sort of belt.

It was a leathern girdle, which had evidently been worn buckled upon the waist of the man when alive.

The leather was moist, the buckle rusty.

Gilliatt pulled the girdle; the vertebræ of the skeleton resisted, and he was compelled to break through them in order to remove it. A crust of small shells had begun to form upon it.

He felt it, and found a hard substance within, apparently of square form. It was useless to endeavour to unfasten the buckle, so he cut the leather with his knife.

The girdle contained a little iron box and some pieces of gold. Gilliatt counted twenty guineas.

The iron box was an old sailor's tobacco-box, opening and shutting with a spring. It was very tight and rusty. The spring, being completely oxidized, would not work.

Once more the knife served Gilliatt in a difficulty. A pressure with the point of the blade caused the lid to fly up.

The box was open.

There was nothing inside but pieces of paper.

A little roll of very thin sheets, folded in four, were fitted in the bottom of the box. They were damp, but not injured. The box, hermetically sealed, had preserved them. Gilliatt unfolded them.

They were three bank-notes of one thousand pounds sterling each, making together seventy-five thousand francs.

Gilliatt folded them again, replaced them in the box, taking advantage of the space which remained to add the twenty guineas; and then reclosed the box as well as he could.

Next he examined the girdle.

The leather, which had originally been polished outside, was rough within. Upon this tawny ground some letters had been traced in black thick ink. Gilliatt deciphered them, and read the words "Sieur Clubin."

## V.

### THE FATAL DIFFERENCE BETWEEN SIX INCHES AND TWO FEET.

GILLIATT replaced the box in the girdle, and placed the girdle in the pocket of his trowsers.

He left the skeleton among the crabs, with the remains of the devil-fish beside it.

While he had been occupied with the devil-fish and the skeleton, the rising tide had submerged the entrance to the cave. He was only enabled to leave it by plunging under the arched entrance. He got through without difficulty, for he knew the entrance well, and was master of these gymnastics in the sea.

It is easy to understand the drama which had taken place there during the ten weeks preceding. One monster had preyed upon another; the devil-fish had seized Clubin.

These two embodiments of treachery had met in the inexorable darkness. There had been an encounter at the bottom of the sea between these two compounds of mystery and watchfulness; the monster had destroyed the man—a horrible fulfilment of justice.

The crab feeds on carrion, the devil-fish on crabs. The devil-fish seizes as it passes any swimming animal—an otter, a dog, a man if it can—sucks the blood, and leaves the body at

the bottom of the water. The crabs are the spider-formed scavengers of the sea. Putrefying flesh attracts them; they crowd round it, devour the body, and are in their turn consumed by the devil-fish. Dead creatures disappear in the crab, the crab disappears in the pieuvre. This is the law which we have already pointed out.

The devil-fish had laid hold of him, and drowned him. Some wave had carried his body into the cave, and deposited it at the extremity of the inner cavern, where Gilliatt had discovered it.

He returned searching among the rocks for sea-urchins and limpets. He had no desire for crabs; to have eaten them now would have seemed to him like feeding upon human flesh.

For the rest, he thought of nothing but of eating what he could before starting. Nothing now interposed to prevent his departure. Great tempests are always followed by a calm, which lasts sometimes several days. There was, therefore, no danger from the sea. Gilliatt had resolved to leave the rocks on the following day. It was important, on account of the tide, to keep the barrier between the two Dourves during the night, but he intended to remove it at daybreak, to push the sloop out to sea, and set sail for St. Sampson. The light breeze which was blowing came from the south-west, which was precisely the wind which he would want.

It was in the first quarter of the moon, in the month of May; the days were long.

When Gilliatt, having finished his wanderings among the rocks, and appeased his appetite to some extent, returned to the passage between the two Dourves, where he had left the sloop, the sun had set, the twilight was increased by that pale light which comes from a crescent moon; the tide had attained its height, and was beginning to ebb. The funnel, standing upright above the sloop, had been covered by the foam during the tempest with a coating of salt which glittered white in the light of the moon.

This circumstance reminded Gilliatt that the storm had inundated the sloop both with surf and rain-water, and that, if he meant to start in the morning, it would be necessary to bale it out.

Before leaving to go in quest of crabs, he had ascertained that it had about six inches of water in the hold. The scoop which he used for the purpose would, he thought, be sufficient for throwing the water overboard.

On arriving at the barrier, Gilliatt was struck with terror. There were nearly two feet of water in the sloop. A terrible discovery—the bark had sprung a leak.

She had been making water gradually during his absence. Burdened as she was, two feet of water was a perilous addition. A little more, and she must inevitably founder. If he had returned but an hour later, he would probably have found nothing above water but the funnel and the mast.

There was not a minute to be lost in deliberation. It was absolutely necessary to find the

leakage, stop it, and then empty the vessel, or, at all events, lighten it. The pumps of the *Durande* had been lost in the break-up of the wreck. He was reduced to use the scoop of the bark.

To find the leak was the most urgent necessity.

Gilliatt set to work immediately, and without even giving himself time to dress. He shivered, but he no longer felt either hunger or cold.

The water continued to gain upon his vessel. Fortunately, there was no wind. The slightest swell would have been fatal.

The moon went down.

Bent low, and plunged in the water deeper than his waist, he groped about for a long time. He discovered the mischief at last.

During the gale, at the critical moment when the sloop had swerved, the strong bark had bumped and grazed rather violently on the rocks. One of the projections of the *Little Douvre* had made a fracture in the starboard side of the hull.

The leak unluckily—it might almost have been said, maliciously—had been made near the joint of the two riders, a fact which, joined with the fury of the hurricane, had prevented him perceiving it during his dark and rapid survey in the height of the storm.

The fracture was alarming on account of its size; but fortunately, although the vessel was sunk lower than usual by the weight of water, it was still above the ordinary water-line.

At the moment when the accident had occurred, the waves had rolled heavily into the defile, and had flooded through the breach, and the vessel had sunk a few inches under the additional weight; so that, even after the subsidence of the water, the weight, having raised the water-line, had kept the hole still under the surface. Hence the imminence of the danger. But if he could succeed in stopping the leak, he could empty the sloop; the hole once staunch-ed, the vessel would rise to its usual water-line, the fracture would be above water, and in this position the repair would be easy, or at least possible. He had still, as we have already said, his carpenters' tools in good condition.

But, meanwhile, what uncertainty must he not endure! What perils, what chances of accidents! He heard the water rising inexorably. One shock, and all would have perished. What misery seemed in store for him. Perhaps his endeavours were even now too late.

He reproached himself bitterly. He thought that he ought to have seen the damage immediately. The six inches of water in the hold ought to have suggested it to him. He had been stupid enough to attribute these six inches of water to the rain and the foam. He was angry with himself for having slept and eaten; he taxed himself even with his weariness, and almost with the storm and the dark night. All seemed to him to have been his own fault.

These bitter self-reproaches filled his mind while engaged in his labour, but they did not



prevent his considering well the work he was engaged in.

The leak had been found—that was the first step; to staunch it was the second. That was all that was possible for the moment. Joinery work cannot be carried on under water.

It was a favourable circumstance that the breach in the hull was in the space between the two chains which held the funnel fast on the starboard side. The stuffing with which it was necessary to stop it could be fixed to these chains.

The water, meanwhile, was gaining. Its depth was now between two and three feet, and it reached above his knees.

## VI.

### DE PROFUNDIS AD ALTUM.

GILLIATT had to his hand among his reserve of rigging for the sloop a pretty large tarpaulin, furnished with long lanyards at the four corners.

He took this tarpaulin, made fast the two corners by the lanyards to the two rings of the chains of the funnel on the same side as the leak, and threw it over the gunwale. The tarpaulin hung like a sheet between the *Little Douvre* and the bark, and sunk in the water. The pressure of the water endeavouring to enter into the hold, kept it close to the hull upon the gap. The heavier the pressure, the closer the sail adhered. It was stuck by the water itself right upon the fracture. The wound of the bark was staunched.

The tarred canvas formed an effectual barrier between the interior of the hold and the waves without. Not a drop of water entered. The leak was masked, but was not stopped. It was a respite only.

Gilliatt took the scoop and began to bale the sloop. It was time that she were lightened. The labour warmed him a little, but his weariness was extreme. He was forced to acknowledge to himself that he could not complete the work of staunching the hold. He had scarcely eaten anything, and he had the humiliation of feeling himself exhausted.

He measured the progress of his work by the sinking of the level of water below his knees. The fall was slow.

Moreover, the leakage was only interrupted; the evil was moderated, not repaired. The tarpaulin pushed into the gap began to bulge inside, looking as if a fist were under the canvas endeavouring to force it through. The canvas, strong and pitchy, resisted; but the swelling and the tension increased; it was not certain that it would not give way, and at any moment the swelling might become a rent. The irruption of water must then recommence.

In such a case, as the crews of vessels in distress know well, there is no other remedy than stuffing. The sailors take rags of every kind which they can find at hand—everything, in fact,

which in their language is called “service,” and with this they push the bulging sailcloth as far as they can into the leak.

Of this “service” Gilliatt had none. All the rags and tow which he had stored up had been used in his operations, or carried away by the storm.

If necessary, he might possibly have been able to find some remains by searching among the rocks. The sloop was sufficiently lightened for him to leave it with safety for a quarter of an hour; but how could he make this search without a light? The darkness was complete. There was no longer any moon—nothing but the starry sky. He had no dry tow with which to make a match, no tallow to make a candle, no fire to light one, no lantern to shelter it from the wind. In the sloop and among the rocks all was confused and indistinct. He could hear the water lapping against the wounded hull, but he could not even see the crack. It was with his hands that he had ascertained the bulging of the tarpaulin. In that darkness it was impossible to make any useful search for rags of canvas or pieces of tow scattered among the breakers. Who could glean these waifs and strays without being able to see his path? Gilliatt looked sorrowfully at the sky; all those stars, he thought, and yet no light!

The water in the bark having diminished, the pressure from without increased. The bulging of the canvas became larger, and was still increasing, like a frightful abscess ready to burst. The situation, which had been improved for a short time, began to be threatening.

Some means of stopping it effectually was absolutely necessary. He had nothing left but his clothes, which he had stretched to dry upon the projecting rocks of the *Little Douvre*.

He hastened to fetch them, and placed them upon the gunwale of the sloop.

Then he took his tarpaulin overcoat, and, kneeling in the water, thrust it into the crevice, and pushing the swelling of the sail outward, emptied it of water. To the tarpaulin coat he added the sheepskin, then his Guernsey shirt, and then his jacket. The hole received them all. He had nothing left but his sailor's trowsers, which he took off and pushed in with the other articles. This enlarged and strengthened the stuffing. The stopper was made, and it appeared to be sufficient.

These clothes passed partly through the gap, the sail-cloth outside enveloping them. The sea, making an effort to enter, pressed against the obstacle, spread it over the gap, and blocked it. It was a sort of exterior compression.

Inside, the centre only of the bulging having been driven out, there remained all around the gap, and the stuffing just thrust through, a sort of circular pad formed by the tarpaulin, which was rendered still firmer by the irregularities of the fracture with which it had become entangled.

The leak was staunched, but nothing could be more precarious. Those sharp splinters of

the gap which fixed the tarpaulin might pierce it and make holes, by which the water would enter, while he would not even perceive it in the darkness. There was little probability of the stoppage lasting until daylight. Gilliatt's anxiety changed its form; but he felt it increasing at the same time that he found his strength leaving him.

He had again set to work to bale out the hold, but his arms, in spite of all his efforts, could scarcely lift a scoopful of water. He was naked and shivering. He felt as if the end were now at hand.

One possible chance flashed across his mind. There might be a sail in sight. A fishing-boat which should by any accident be in the neighbourhood of the Douvres might come to his assistance. The moment had arrived when a helpmate was absolutely necessary. With a man and a lantern all might yet be saved. If there were two persons, one might easily bale the vessel. Since the leak was temporarily stanchied, as soon as she could be relieved of this burden she would rise, and regain her ordinary water-line. The leak would then be above the surface of the water, the repairs would be practicable, and he would be able immediately to replace the stuff by a piece of planking, and thus substitute for the temporary stoppage a complete repair. If not, it would be necessary to wait till daylight—to wait the whole night long; a delay which might prove ruinous. If by chance some ship's lantern should be in sight, Gilliatt would be able to signal it from the height of the Great Douvre. The weather was calm; there was no wind or sea; there was a possibility of the figure of a man being observed moving against the background of the starry sky. A captain of a ship, or even the master of a fishing-boat, would not be at night in the waters of the Douvres without directing his glass upon the rock, by way of precaution.

Gilliatt hoped that some one might perceive him.

He climbed upon the wreck, grasped the knotted rope, and mounted upon the Great Douvre.

Not a sail was visible around the horizon; not a boat's lantern. The wide expanse, as far as eye could reach, was a desert. No assistance was possible, and no resistance possible.

Gilliatt felt himself without resources—a feeling which he had not felt until then.

A dark fatality was now his master. With all his labour, all his success, all his courage, he and his bark, and its precious burden, were about to become the sport of the waves. He had no other means of continuing the struggle; he became listless. How could he prevent the tide from returning, the water from rising, the night from continuing? The temporary stoppage which he had made was his sole reliance. He had exhausted and stripped himself in constructing and completing it; he could neither fortify nor add to it. The stop-gap was such

that it must remain as it was, and every further effort was useless. The apparatus, hastily constructed, was at the mercy of the waves. How would this inert obstacle work? It was this obstacle now, not Gilliatt, which had to sustain the combat—that handful of rags, not that intelligence. The swell of a wave would suffice to reopen the fracture. More or less of pressure; the whole question was comprised in that formula.

All depended upon a brute struggle between two mechanical quantities. Henceforth he could neither aid his auxiliary nor stop his enemy. He was no longer any other than a mere spectator of this struggle, which was one for him of life or death. He who had ruled over it, a supreme intelligence, was at the last moment compelled to resign all to a mere blind resistance.

No trial, no terror that he had yet undergone, could bear comparison with this.

From the time when he had taken up his abode upon the Douvres, he had found himself surrounded, and, as it were, possessed by solitude. This solitude more than surrounded, it enveloped him. A thousand menaces at once had met him face to face. The wind was always there, ready to become furious; the sea, ready to roar. There was no stopping that terrible mouth, the wind—no imprisoning that dread monster, the sea. And yet he had striven—he, a solitary man, had combated hand to hand with the ocean, had wrestled even with the tempest.

Many other anxieties, many other necessities had he made head against. There was no form of distress with which he had not become familiar. He had been compelled to execute great works without tools, to move vast burdens without aid; without science, to resolve problems; without provisions, to find food; without bed or roof to cover it, to find shelter and sleep.

Upon that solitary rock he had been subjected by turns to all the varied and cruel tortures of nature; oftentimes a gentle mother, not less often a pitiless destroyer.

He had conquered his isolation, conquered hunger, conquered thirst, conquered cold, conquered fever, conquered labour, conquered sleep. He had encountered a mighty coalition of obstacles formed to bar his progress. After his privations, there were the elements; after the sea, the tempest; after the tempest, the devil-fish; after the monster, the spectre.

A dismal irony was then the end of all. Upon this rock, whence he had thought to arise triumphant, the spectre of Clubin had arisen to mock him with a hideous smile.

The grin of the spectre was well founded. Gilliatt saw himself ruined—saw himself no less than Clubin in the grasp of death.

The winter, famine, fatigue, the dismemberment of the wreck, the removal of the machinery, the equinoctial gale, the thunder, the monster, were all as nothing compared with this small fracture in a vessel's planks. Against the



cold one could procure—and he had procured—fire; against hunger, the shell-fish of the rocks; against thirst, the rain; against the difficulties of his great task, industry and energy; against the sea and the storm, the breakwater; against the devil-fish, the knife; but against the terrible leak he had no weapon.

The hurricane had bequeathed him this sinister farewell. The last struggle, the traitorous thrust, the treacherous side-blow of the vanquished foe. In its flight the tempest had turned and shot this arrow in the rear. It was the final and deadly stab of his antagonist.

It was possible to combat with the tempest, but how could he struggle with that insidious enemy who now attacked him?

If the stoppage gave way, if the leak reopened, nothing could prevent the sloop foundering. It would be the bursting of the ligature of the artery; and once under the water with its heavy burden, no power could raise it. The noble struggle, with two months' Titanic labour, ended then in annihilation. To recommence would be impossible. He had neither forge nor materials. At daylight, in all probability, he was about to see all his work sink slowly and irrecoverably into the gulf. Terrible to feel that sombre power beneath. The sea snatched his prize from his hands.

With his bark engulfed, no fate awaited him but to perish of hunger and cold, like the poor shipwrecked sailor on "The Man" rock.

During two long months the intelligences which hover invisibly over the world had been the spectators of these things—on one hand the wide expanse, the waves, the winds, the lightnings, the meteors; on the other, a man. On one hand the sea, on the other a human mind; on the one hand the infinite, on the other an atom.

The battle had been fierce, and behold the abortive issue of those prodigies of valour.

Thus did this heroism without parallel end in powerlessness; thus ended in despair that formidable struggle—that struggle of a nothing against all; that Iliad against one.

Gilliat gazed wildly into space.

He had no clothing. He stood naked in the midst of that immensity.

Then, overwhelmed by the sense of that unknown infinity, like one bewildered by a strange persecution, confronting the shadows of night, in the presence of that impenetrable darkness, in the midst of the murmur of the waves, the swell, the foam, the breeze, under the clouds, under that vast diffusion of force, under that mysterious firmament of wings, of stars, of gulfs, having around him and beneath him the ocean, above him the constellations, under him the great unfathomable deep, he sank, gave up the struggle, lay down upon the rock, his face towards the stars, humbled, and, uplifting his joined hands towards the terrible depths, he cried aloud, "Have mercy!"

Weighted down to earth by that immensity, he prayed.

He was there alone, in that darkness upon the rock, in the midst of that sea, stricken down with exhaustion, like one smitten by lightning, naked like the gladiator in the circus, save that for circus he had the vast horizon; instead of wild beasts, the shadows of darkness; instead of the faces of the crowd, the eyes of the unknown; instead of the Vestals, the stars; instead of Cæsar, the All-powerful.

His whole being seemed to dissolve in cold, fatigue, powerlessness, prayer, and darkness, and his eyes closed.

## VII.

### THE APPEAL IS HEARD.

SOME hours passed.

The sun rose in an unclouded sky.

Its first ray shone upon a motionless form upon the Great Douvre. It was Gilliat.

He was still outstretched upon the rock.

He was naked, cold, and stiff, but he did not shiver. His closed eyelids were wan. It would have been difficult for a beholder to say whether the form before him was a corpse.

The sun seemed to look upon him.

If he were not dead, he was already so near death that the slightest cold wind would have sufficed to extinguish life.

The wind began to breathe, warm and animating—the opening breath of May.

Meanwhile the sun ascended in the deep blue sky; its rays, less horizontal, flushed the sky. Its light became warmth. It enveloped the slumbering form.

Gilliat moved not. If he breathed, it was only that feeble respiration which could scarcely tarnish the surface of a mirror.

The sun continued its ascent, its rays striking less and less obliquely upon the naked man. The gentle breeze, which had been merely tepid, became hot.

The rigid and naked body remained still without movement, but the skin seemed less livid.

The sun, approaching the zenith, shone almost perpendicularly upon the plateau of the Douvres. A flood of light descended from the heavens; the vast reflection from the glassy sea increased its splendour: the rock itself imbibed the rays and warmed the sleeper.

A sigh raised his breast.

He lived.

The sun continued its gentle offices. The wind, which was already the breath of summer and of noon, approached him like loving lips that breathed upon him softly.

Gilliat moved.

The peaceful calm upon the sea was perfect. Its murmur was like the droning of the nurse beside the sleeping infant. The rock seemed cradled in the waves.

The sea-birds, who knew that form, fluttered above it; not with their old, wild astonishment,

but with a sort of fraternal tenderness. They uttered plaintive cries—they seemed to be calling to him. A sea-mew, who no doubt knew him, was tame enough to come near him. It began to caw as if speaking to him. The sleeper seemed not to hear. The bird hopped upon his shoulder, and pecked his lips softly.

Gilliatt opened his eyes.

The birds dispersed, chattering wildly.

Gilliatt arose, stretched himself like a roused lion, ran to the edge of the platform, and looked down into the space between the two Douvres.

The sloop was there, intact; the stoppage had held out; the sea had probably disturbed it but little.

All was saved.

He was no longer weary. His powers had returned. His swoon had ended in a deep sleep.

He descended and baled out the sloop, emptied the hold, raised the leakage above the wa-

ter-line, dressed himself, ate, drank some water, and was joyful.

The gap in the side of his vessel, examined in broad daylight, proved to require more labour than he had thought. It was a serious fracture. The entire day was too long for its repair.

At daybreak on the morrow, after removing the barrier and reopening the entrance to the defile, dressed in the tattered clothing which had served to stop the leak, having about him Clubin's girdle and the seventy-five thousand francs, standing erect in the sloop, now repaired, by the side of the machinery which he had rescued, with a favourable breeze and a good sea, Gilliatt pushed off from the Douvres.

He put the sloop's head for Guernsey.

At the moment of his departure from the rocks, any one who had been there might have heard him singing in an undertone the air of "Bonny Dundee."



## THIRD PART.—DÉRUCHETTE.

## BOOK I.

## NIGHT AND THE MOON.

## I.

## THE HARBOUR CLOCK.

THE St. Sampson of the present day is almost a city; the St. Sampson of forty years since was almost a village.

When the winter evenings were ended, and spring had come, the inhabitants were not long out of bed after sundown. St. Sampson was an ancient parish which had long been accustomed to the sound of curfew-bell, and which had a traditional habit of blowing out the candle at an early hour. Folks there went to bed and rose with the day. Those old Norman villagers are generally great rearers of poultry.

The people of St. Sampson, except a few rich families among the townsfolk, are also a population of quarriers and carpenters. The port is a port of ship repairing. The quarrying of stone and the fashioning of timber goes on all day long; here the labourer with the pickaxe, there the workman with the mallet. At night they sink with fatigue, and sleep like lead. Rude labours bring heavy slumbers.

One evening, in the commencement of the month of May, after watching the crescent moon for some instants through the trees, and listening to the step of Déruchette walking alone in the cool air in the garden of the Bravées, Mess Lethierry had returned to his room looking on the harbour, and had retired to rest; Douce and Grace were already a-bed. Except Déruchette, the whole household were sleeping. Doors and shutters were everywhere closed. Footsteps were silent in the streets. Some few lights, like winking eyes about to close in rest, showed here and there in windows in the roofs, indicating the hour of domestics going to bed. Nine had already struck by the old Roman clock, surrounded by ivy, which shares with the church of St. Brélade at Jersey the peculiarity of having for its day four ones (III), which are used to signify eleven hundred and eleven.

The popularity of Mess Lethierry at St. Sampson had been founded on his success. The success at an end, there had come a void. It might be imagined that ill fortune is contagious, and that the unsuccessful have a plague, so rapidly are they put in quarantine. The young men of well-to-do families avoided Déruchette. The isolation around the Bravées was so com-

plete, that its inmates had not even yet heard the news of the great local event which had that day set all St. Sampson in a ferment. The rector of the parish, the Rev. Ebenezer Caudray, had become rich. His uncle, the magnificent Dean of St. Asaph, had just died in London. The news had been brought by the mail sloop, the "Cashmere," arrived from England that very morning, and the mast of which could be perceived in the roads of St. Peter's Port. The "Cashmere" was to depart for Southampton at noon on the morrow, and, so the rumour ran, to convey the reverend gentleman, who had been suddenly summoned to England, to be present at the official opening of the will, not to speak of other urgent matters connected with an important inheritance. All day long St. Sampson had been conversing on this subject. The "Cashmere," the Rev. Ebenezer, his deceased uncle, his riches, his departure, his possible preferment in the future, had formed the foundations of that perpetual buzzing. A solitary house, still uninformed on these matters, had remained at peace. This was the Bravées.

Mess Lethierry had jumped into his hammock, and lay down in his clothing.

Since the catastrophe of the Durande, to get into his hammock had been his resource. Every captive has recourse to stretching himself upon his pallet, and Mess Lethierry was the captive of his grief. To go to bed was a truce, a gain in breathing-time, a suspension of ideas. He neither slept nor watched. Strictly speaking, for two months and a half—for so long was it since his misfortune—Mess Lethierry had been in a sort of somnambulism. He had not yet regained possession of his faculties. He was in that cloudy and confused condition of intellect with which those are familiar who have undergone overwhelming afflictions. His reflections were not thought, his sleep was no repose. By day he was not awake, by night not asleep. He was up, and then gone to rest, that was all. When he was in his hammock forgetfulness came to him a little. He called that sleeping. Chimeras floated about him and within him. The nocturnal cloud, full of confused faces, traversed his brain. Sometimes it was the Emperor Napoleon dictating to him the story of his life; sometimes there were several Déruchettes; strange birds were in the trees;

the streets of Lons-le-Saulnier became serpents. Nightmares are the brief respites of despair. He passed his nights in dreaming, and his days in reverie.

Sometimes he remained all the afternoon at the window of his room, which looked out upon the port, with his head drooping, his elbows on the stone, his ears resting on his fists, his back turned to the whole world, his eye fixed on the old massive iron ring fastened in the wall of the house, at only a few feet from his window, where in the old days he used to moor the *Durande*. He was looking at the rust which gathered on the ring.

He was reduced to the mere mechanical habit of living.

The bravest men, when deprived of their most cherished idea, will come to this. His life had become a void. Life is a voyage; the idea is the itinerary. The plan of their course gone, they stop. The object is lost, the strength of purpose gone. Fate has a secret discretionary power. It is able to touch with its rod even our moral being. Despair is almost the destitution of the soul. Only the greatest minds resist, and for what?

Mess Lethierry was always meditating, if absorption can be called meditation, in the depth of a sort of cloudy abyss. Broken words sometimes escaped him like these: "There is nothing left for me now but to ask yonder for leave to go."

There was a certain contradiction in that nature, complex as the sea, of which Mess Lethierry was, so to speak, the product. Mess Lethierry's grief did not seek relief in prayer.

To be powerless is a certain strength. In the presence of our two great expressions of this blindness—destiny and nature—it is in his powerlessness that man has found his chief support in prayer.

Man seeks succour from his terror; his anxiety bids him kneel.

But Mess Lethierry prayed not.

In the time when he was happy, God existed for him almost in visible contact. Lethierry addressed Him, pledged his word to Him, seemed at times to hold familiar intercourse with Him. But in the hour of his misfortune—a phenomena not unfrequent—the idea of God had become eclipsed in his mind. This happens when the mind has created for itself a deity clothed with human qualities.

In the state of mind in which he existed, there was for Lethierry only one clear vision—the smile of *Déruchette*. Beyond this all was dark.

For some time, apparently on account of the loss of the *Durande*, and of the blow which it had been to them, this pleasant smile had been rare. She seemed always thoughtful. Her birdlike playfulness, his childlike ways were gone. She was never seen now in the morning, at the sound of the cannon which announced daybreak, saluting the rising sun with the "Boom! Daylight! Come in, please!" At

times her expression was very serious, a sad thing for that sweet nature. She made an effort, however, sometimes to laugh before Mess Lethierry and to divert him; but her cheerfulness grew tarnished from day to day—gathered dust like the wing of a butterfly with a pin through his body. Whether through sorrow for her uncle's sorrow—for there are griefs which are the reflections of other griefs—or whether for any other reasons, she appeared at this time to be much inclined towards religion. In the time of the old rector, M. Jaquemin Hérode, she scarcely went to church, as has been already said, four times a year. Now she was, on the contrary, assiduous in her attendance. She missed no service, neither of Sunday or of Thursday. Pious souls in the parish remarked with satisfaction that amendment; for it is a great blessing when a girl who runs so many dangers in the world turns her thoughts towards God. That enables the poor parents at least to be easy on the subject of love-making and what not.

In the evening, whenever the weather permitted, she walked for an hour or two in the garden of the *Bravées*. She was almost as pensive there as Mess Lethierry, and almost always alone. *Déruchette* went to bed last. This, however, did not prevent *Douce* and *Grace* watching her a little, by that instinct for spying which is common to servants; spying is such a relaxation after household work.

As to Mess Lethierry, in the abstracted state of his mind, these little changes in *Déruchette's* habits escaped him. Moreover, his nature had little in common with the *Duenna*. He had not even remarked her regularity at the church. Tenacious of his prejudices against the clergy and their sermons, he would have seen with little pleasure these frequent attendances at the parish church. It was not because his own moral condition was not undergoing change. Sorrow is a cloud which changes form.

Robust natures, as we have said, are sometimes almost overthrown by sudden great misfortunes, but not quite. Manly characters such as Lethierry's experience a reaction in a given time. Despair has its backward stages. From overwhelming we rise to dejection; from dejection to affliction; from affliction to melancholy. Melancholy is a twilight state; suffering melts into it and becomes a sombre joy. Melancholy is the pleasure of being sad.

These elegiac moods were not made for Lethierry. Neither the nature of his temperament nor the character of his misfortune suited those delicate shades. But at the moment at which we have returned to him, the reverie of his first despair had for more than a week been tending to disperse, without, however, leaving him less sad. He was more inactive, was always dull, but he was no longer overwhelmed. A certain perception of events and circumstances was returning to him, and he began to experience something of that phenomenon which may be called the return to reality.



Thus by day in the great lower room he did not listen to the words of those about him, but he heard them. Grace came one morning quite triumphant to tell Déruchette that he had undone the cover of a newspaper.

This half acceptance of realities is in itself a good symptom, a token of convalescence. Great afflictions produce a stupor; it is by such little acts that men return to themselves. This improvement, however, is at first only an aggravation of the evil. The dreamy condition of mind in which the sufferer has lived, has served, while it lasted, to blunt his grief. His sight before was thick. He felt little. Now his view is clear, nothing escapes him, and his wounds reopen. Each detail that he perceives serves to remind him of his sorrow. He sees everything again in memory, every remembrance a regret. All kinds of bitter aftertastes lurk in that return to life. He is better, and yet worse. Such was the condition of Lethierry. In returning to full consciousness, his sufferings had become more distinct.

A sudden shock first recalled him to a sense of reality.

One afternoon, between the 15th and 20th of April, a double knock at the door of the great lower room of the Bravées had signalled the arrival of the postman. Douce had opened the door; there was a letter.

The letter came from beyond sea; it was addressed to Mess Lethierry, and bore the postmark "Lisboa."

Douce had taken the letter to Mess Lethierry, who was in his room. He had taken it, placed it mechanically upon the table, and had not looked at it.

The letter remained an entire week upon the table without being unsealed.

It happened, however, one morning that Douce said to Mess Lethierry,

"Shall I brush the dust off your letter, sir?"

Lethierry seemed to arouse from his lethargy:

"Ay, ay! You are right," he said; and he opened the letter, and read as follows:

"At Sea. 10th March.

"To Mess Lethierry, of St. Sampson:

"You will be gratified to receive news of me.

I am aboard the 'Tamaulipas,' bound for the port of 'Noreturn.' Among the crew is a sailor named Ahier-Tostevin, from Guernsey, who will return, and will have some facts to communicate to you. I take the opportunity of our speaking a vessel, the 'Hernan Cortes,' bound for Lisbon, to forward you this letter.

"You will be astonished to learn that I am going to be honest.

"As honest as Sieur Clubin.

"I am bound to believe that you know of certain recent occurrences; nevertheless, it is, perhaps, not altogether superfluous to send you a full account of them.

"To proceed, then:

"I have returned you your money.

"Some years ago, I borrowed from you, un-

der somewhat irregular circumstances, the sum of fifty thousand francs. Before leaving St. Malo lately, I placed in the hands of your confidential man of business, Sieur Clubin, on your account, three bank-notes of one thousand pounds each, making together seventy-five thousand francs. You will, no doubt, find this reimbursement sufficient.

"Sieur Clubin received your money, including interest, in a remarkably energetic manner. He appeared to me, indeed, singularly zealous. This is, in fact, my reason for apprising you of the facts.

"Your other confidential man of business,

"RANTAINÉ.

"*Postscript.*

"Sieur Clubin was in possession of a revolver, which will explain to you the circumstance of my having no receipt."

He who has ever touched a torpedo, or Leyden jar fully charged, may have a notion of the effect produced on Mess Lethierry by his reading of this letter.

Under that envelope, in that sheet of paper folded in four, to which he had at first paid so little attention, lay the elements of an extraordinary commotion.

He recognized the writing and the signature. As to the facts which the letter contained, at first he understood nothing.

The excitement of the event, however, soon gave movement to his faculties.

The effective part of the shock he had received lay in the phenomenon of the seventy-five thousand francs entrusted by Rantaine to Clubin; this was a riddle which compelled Lethierry's brain to work. Conjecture is a healthy occupation for the mind. Reason is awakened, logic is called into play.

For some time past, public opinion in Guernsey had been undergoing a reaction on the subject of Clubin—that man of such high reputation for honour during many years; that man so unanimously regarded with esteem. People had begun to question and to doubt; there were wagers pro and con. Some light had been thrown on the question in singular ways. The figure of Clubin began to come clearer; that is to say, he began to be blacker in the eyes of the world.

A judicial inquiry had taken place at St. Malo for the purpose of ascertaining what had become of the coastguard-man, number 619. Legal perspicacity had got upon a false scent, a thing which happens not unfrequently. It had started with the hypothesis that the man had been enticed by Zuela, and shipped aboard the "Tamaulipas" for Chili. This ingenious supposition had led to a considerable amount of wasted conjecture. The short-sightedness of justice had failed to take note of Rantaine, but in the progress of inquiry the authorities had come upon other clews. The affair, so obscure, became complicated. Clubin had become mixed up with the enigma. A coincidence,

perhaps a direct connection had been found between the departure of the "Tamaulipas" and the loss of the Durande. At the wine-shop near the Dinan Gate, where Clubin thought himself entirely unknown, he had been recognised. The wine-shop keeper had talked; Clubin had bought a bottle of brandy that night. For whom? The gunsmith of St. Vincent Street, too, had talked. Clubin had purchased a revolver. For what object? The landlord of the "Jean Auberge" had talked. Clubin had absented himself in an inexplicable manner. Captain Gertrais-Gabourreau had talked; Clubin had determined to start, although warned, and knowing that he might expect a great fog. The crew of the Durande had talked. In fact, the collection of the freight had been neglected, and the stowage badly arranged, a negligence easy to comprehend, if the captain had determined to wreck the ship. The Guernsey passenger, too, had spoken. Clubin had evidently imagined that he had run upon the Hanways. The Torteval people had spoken. Clubin had visited that neighbourhood a few days before the loss of the Durande, and had been seen walking in the direction of Pleinmont, near the Hanways. He had with him a travelling-bag. "He had set out with it, and come back without it." The birds'-nesters had spoken: their story seemed to be possibly connected with Clubin's disappearance, if, instead of ghosts, they supposed smugglers. Finally, the haunted house of Pleinmont itself had spoken. Persons who had determined to get information, had climbed and entered the windows, and had found inside—what? The very travelling-bag which had been seen in Sieur Clubin's possession. The authorities of the Douzaine of Torteval had taken possession of the bag and had it opened. It was found to contain provisions, a telescope, a chronometer, a man's clothing, and linen marked with Clubin's initials. All this in the gossip of St. Malo and Guernsey became more and more like a case of fraud. Obscure hints were brought together; there appeared to have been a singular disregard of advice; a willingness to encounter the dangers of the fog; a suspected negligence in the stowage of the cargo. Then there was the mysterious bottle of brandy; a drunken helmsman; a substitution of the captain for the helmsman; a management of the rudder, to say the least, unskilful. The heroism of remaining behind upon the wreck began to look like roguery. Clubin, besides, had evidently been deceived as to the rock he was on. Granted an intention to wreck the vessel, it was easy to understand the choice of the Hanways, the shore easily reached by swimming, and the intended concealment in the haunted house awaiting the opportunity for flight. The travelling-bag, that suspicious preparative, completed the demonstration. By what link this affair connected itself with the other affair of the disappearance of the coast-guard-man nobody knew. People imagined some connection, and that was all. They had

a glimpse in their minds of the look-out man, number 619, alongside of the mysterious Clubin—quite a tragic drama. Clubin possibly was not an actor in it, but his presence was visible in the side scenes.

The supposition of a wilful destruction of the Durande did not explain everything. There was a revolver in the story, with no part yet assigned to it. The revolver, probably, belonged to the other affair.

The scent of the public is keen and true. Its instinct excels in those discoveries of truth by pieces and fragments. Still, amidst these facts, which seemed to point pretty clearly to a case of barratry, there were serious difficulties.

Everything was consistent—everything coherent; but a basis was wanting.

People do not wreck vessels for the pleasure of wrecking them. Men do not run all those risks of fog, rocks, swimming, concealment, and flight without an interest. What could have been Clubin's interest?

The act seemed plain, but the motive was puzzling.

Hence a doubt in many minds. Where there is no motive, it is natural to infer that there was no act.

The missing link was important. The letter from Rantaine seemed to supply it.

This letter furnished a motive for Clubin's supposed crime—seventy-five thousand francs to be appropriated.

Rantaine was the *Deus ex machina*. He had descended from the clouds with a lantern in his hand. His letter was the final light upon the affair. It explained everything, and even promised a witness in the person of Ahier-Tostevin.

The part which it at once suggested for the revolver was decisive. Rantaine was undoubtedly well informed. His letter pointed clearly the explanation of the mystery.

There could be no possible palliation of Clubin's crime. He had premeditated the shipwreck; the proofs were the preparations discovered in the haunted house. Even supposing him innocent, and admitting the wreck to have been accidental, would he not, at the last moment, when he had determined to sacrifice himself with the vessel, have intrusted the seventy-five thousand francs to the men who escaped in the long-boat? The evidence was strikingly complete. Now what had become of Clubin? He had probably been the victim of his blunder. He had doubtless perished upon the Douvres.

All this construction of surmises, which were not far from the reality, had for several days occupied the mind of Mess Lethierry. The letter from Rantaine had done him the service of setting him to think. He was at first shaken by his surprise; then he made an effort to reflect. He made another effort more difficult still, that of inquiry. He was induced to listen, and even to seek conversation. At the end of a week he had become, to a certain degree, in the world again; his thoughts had regained their coherence, and he was almost restored. He



had emerged from his confused and troubled state.

Rantaine's letter, even admitting that Mess Lethierry could ever have entertained any hope of the reimbursement of his money, destroyed that last chance.

It added to the catastrophe of the *Durande* this new wreck of seventy-five thousand francs. It put him in possession of that amount just so far as to make him sensible of its loss. The letter revealed to him the extreme point in his ruin.

Hence he experienced a new and very painful impression, which we have already spoken of. He began to take an interest in his household—what it was to be in the future—how he was to set things in order; matters of which he had taken no heed for two months past. These trifling cares wounded him with a thousand tiny points, worse in their aggregate than the old despair. A sorrow is doubly burdensome which has to be endured in each item, and while disputing inch by inch with fate for ground already lost. Ruin is endurable in the mass, but not in the dust and fragments of the fallen edifice. The great fact may overwhelm, but the details torture. The catastrophe which lately fell like a thunderbolt becomes now a cruel persecution. Humiliation comes to aggravate the blow. A second desolation succeeds the first, with features more repulsive. You descend one degree nearer to annihilation. The winding-sheet becomes changed to sordid rags.

No thought is more bitter than that of one's own gradual fall from a social position.

Ruin is simple enough. A violent shock; a cruel turn of fate; a catastrophe once for all. Be it so. We submit, and all is over. You are ruined: it is well; you are dead? No; you are still living. On the morrow you know it well. By what? By the pricking of a pin. Yonder passer-by omits to recognise you; the tradesmen's bills rain down upon you; and yonder is one of your enemies, who is smiling. Perhaps he is thinking of Arnal's last pun; but it is all the same. The pun would not have appeared to him so inimitable but for your ruin. You read your own sudden insignificance even in looks of indifference. Friends who used to dine at your table become of opinion that three courses were an extravagance. Your faults are patent to the eyes of everybody; ingratitude, having nothing more to expect, proclaims itself openly; every idiot has foreseen your misfortunes. The malignant pull you to pieces; the more malignant profess to pity. And then come a hundred paltry details. Nausea succeeds to grief. You have been wont to indulge in wine; you must now drink cider. Two servants, too! Why, one will be too many. It will be necessary to discharge this one, and get rid of that. Flowers in your garden are superfluous; you will plant it with potatoes. You used to make presents of your fruits to friends; you will send them henceforth to market. As to the poor, it will be absurd to think of giving

anything to them. Are you not poor yourself? And then there is the painful question of dress. To have to refuse a wife a new ribbon, what a torture! To have to refuse one who has made you a gift of her beauty a trifling article; haggle over such matters, like a miser! Perhaps she will say to you, "What! rob my garden of its flowers, and now refuse one for my bonnet!" Ah me! to have to condemn her to shabby dresses. The family table is silent. You fancy that those around it think harshly of you. Beloved faces have become clouded. This is what is meant by falling fortunes. It is to die day by day. To be struck down is like the blast of the furnace; to decay like this is the torture of the slow fire.

An overwhelming blow is a sort of Waterloo; a slow decay, a St. Helena. Destiny, incarnate in the form of Wellington, has still some dignity; but how sordid in the shape of Hudson Lowe. Fate becomes then a paltry huckster. We find the man of Campo Formio quarrelling about a pair of stockings; we see that dwarfing of Napoleon which makes England less. Waterloo and St. Helena! Reduced to humbler proportions, every ruined man has traversed those two phases.

On the evening we have mentioned, and which was one of the first evenings in May, Lethierry, leaving *Déruchette* to walk by moonlight in the garden, had gone to bed more depressed than ever.

All these mean and repulsive details, peculiar to worldly misfortune; all these trifling cares, which are at first insipid, and afterwards harassing, were revolving in his mind. A sullen load of miseries! Mess Lethierry felt that his fall was irremediable. What could he do? What would become of them? What sacrifices should he be compelled to impose on *Déruchette*? Whom should he discharge—*Douce* or *Grace*? Would they have to sell the *Bravées*? Would they not be compelled to leave the island? To be nothing where he had been everything; it was a terrible fall indeed.

And to know that the old times were gone for ever! To recall those journeys to and fro, uniting France with those numberless islands; the Tuesday's departure, the Friday's return, the crowd on the quay, those great cargoes, that industry, that prosperity, that proud direct navigation, that machinery embodying the will of man, that all-powerful boiler, that smoke, all that reality! The steam-boat had been the final crown of the compass; the needle indicating the direct track, the steam vessel following it. One proposing, the other executing. Where was she now, his *Durande*, that mistress of the seas, that queen who had made him a king? To have been so long the man of ideas in his own country, the man of success, the man who revolutionized navigation, and then to have to give up all, to abdicate! To cease to exist, to become a by-word, an empty bag which once was full. To belong to the past, after having so long represented the future. To come down to be an

object of pity to fools, to witness the triumph of routine, obstinacy, conservatism, selfishness, ignorance. To see the old barbarous sailing cutters crawling to and fro upon the sea; the outworn Old-world prejudices young again; to have wasted a whole life, to have been a light, and to suffer this eclipse. Ah! what a sight it was upon the waves, that noble funnel, that prodigious cylinder, that pillar with its capital of smoke, that column grander than any in the Place Vendôme, for on that there was only a man, while on this stood Progress. The ocean was beneath it; it was certainty upon the open sea. And had all this been witnessed in that little island, in that little harbour, in that little town of St. Sampson? Yes, it had been witnessed. And could it be, that having seen it, all had vanished to be seen no more?

All this series of regrets tortured Lethierry. There is such a thing as a mental sobbing. Never, perhaps, had he felt his misfortune more bitterly. A certain numbness follows this acute suffering. Under the weight of his sorrow he gradually dozed.

For about two hours he remained in this state, feverish, sleeping a little, meditating much. Such torpors are accompanied by an obscure labour of the brain, which is inexpressibly wearying. Towards the middle of the night, about midnight, a little before or a little after, he shook off this lethargy. He aroused, and opened his eyes. His window was directly in front of his hammock. He saw something extraordinary.

A form was before the window—a marvellous form. It was the funnel of a steam vessel.

Mess Lethierry started, and sat upright in his bed. The hammock oscillated like a swing in a tempest. Lethierry stared. A vision filled the window-frame. There was the harbour flooded with the light of the moon, and against that glitter, quite close to his house, stood forth, tall, round, and black, a magnificent object.

The funnel of a steam vessel was there.

Lethierry sprang out of his hammock, ran to the window, lifted the sash, leaned out, and recognised it.

The funnel of the Durande stood before him.

It was in the old place.

Its four chains supported it, made fast to the bulwarks of a vessel in which, beneath the funnel, he could distinguish a dark mass of irregular outline.

Lethierry recoiled, turned his back to the window, and dropped in a sitting posture into his hammock again.

Then he returned, and once more he saw the vision.

An instant afterwards, or in about the time occupied by a flash of lightning, he was out upon the quay, with a lantern in his hand.

A bark carrying a little backward a massive block from which issued the straight funnel before the window of the Bravées, was made fast to the mooring-ring of the Durande. The bows of the bark stretched beyond the corner of the

wall of the house, and were level with the quay.

There was no one aboard.

The vessel was of a peculiar shape. All Guernsey would have recognised it. It was the old Dutch sloop.

Lethierry jumped aboard; he ran forward to the block which he saw beyond the mast.

It was there, entire, complete, intact, standing square and firm upon its cast-iron flooring; the boiler had all its rivets, the axle of the paddle-wheels was raised erect, and made fast near the boiler; the feed-pump was in its place; nothing was wanting.

Lethierry examined the machinery.

The lantern and the moon helped him in his examination. He went over every part of the mechanism.

He noticed the two cases at the sides. He examined the axle of the wheels.

He went into the little cabin; it was empty.

He returned to the engine, and felt it, looked into the boiler, and knelt down to examine it inside.

He placed his lantern within the furnace, where the light, illuminating all the machinery, produced almost the illusion of an engine-room with its fire.

Then he burst into a wild laugh, sprang to his feet, and with his eye fixed on the engine, and his arms outstretched toward<sup>s</sup> the funnel, he cried aloud, "Help!"

The harbour-bell was upon the quay, at a few paces distance. He ran to it, seized the chain, and began to pull it violently.

## II.

### THE HARBOUR BELL AGAIN.

GILLIATT, in fact, after a passage without accident, but somewhat slow on account of the heavy burden of the sloop, had arrived at St. Sampson after dark, and nearer ten than nine o'clock.

He had calculated the time. The half flood had arrived. There was plenty of water, and the moon was shining, so that he was able to enter the port.

The little harbour was silent. A few vessels were moored there, with their sails brailed up to the yards, their tops over, and without lanterns. At the far end a few others were visible, high and dry in the carenage, where they were undergoing repairs; large hulls dimasted and stripped, with their planking open at various parts, lifting high the ends of their timbers, and looking like huge dead beetles lying on their backs with their legs in the air.

As soon as he had cleared the harbour mouth, Gilliatt examined the port and the quay. There was no light to be seen either at the Bravées or elsewhere. The place was deserted save, perhaps, by some one going to or returning from the parsonage-house; nor was it possible to be sure even of this, for the night blurred every



outline, and the moonlight always gives to objects a vague appearance. The distance added to the indistinctness. The parsonage-house at that period was situated on the other side of the harbour, where there stands at the present day an open mast-house.

Gilliat had approached the *Bravées* quietly, and had made the sloop fast to the ring of the *Durande*, under Mess Lethierry's window.

He leaped over the bulwarks, and was ashore.

Leaving the sloop behind him by the quay, he turned the angle of the house, passed along a little narrow street, then along another, did not even notice the pathway which branched off leading to the *Bû de la Rue*, and in a few minutes found himself at that corner of the wall where there were wild mallows with pink flowers in June, with holly, ivy, and nettles. Many a time concealed behind the bushes, seated on a stone, in the summer days, he had watched here through long hours, even for whole months, often tempted to climb the wall, over which he contemplated the garden of the *Bravées* and the two windows of a little room seen through the branches of the trees. The stone was there still; the bushes, the low wall, the angle, as quiet and dark as ever. Like an animal returning to its hole, gliding rather than walking, he made his way in. Once seated there, he made no movement. He looked around; saw again the garden, the pathways, the beds of flowers, the house, the two windows of the chamber. The moonlight fell upon this dream. He felt it horrible to be compelled to breathe, and did what he could to prevent it.

He seemed to be gazing on a vision of paradise, and was afraid that all would vanish. It was almost impossible that all these things could be really before his eyes; and if they were, it could only be with that imminent danger of melting into air which belongs to things divine. A breath, and all must be dissipated. He trembled with the thought.

Before him, not far off, at the side of one of the alleys in the garden, was a wooden seat painted green. The reader will remember this seat.

Gilliat looked up at the two windows. He thought of the slumber of some one possibly in that room. Behind that wall she was no doubt sleeping. He wished himself elsewhere, yet would sooner have died than go away. He thought of a gentle breathing moving a sleeping figure. It was she, that vision, that purity in the clouds, that form haunting him by day and night. She was there! He thought of her so far removed, and yet so near as to be almost within reach of his delight; he thought of that impossible ideal drooping in slumber, and like himself, too, visited by visions; of that being so long desired, so distant, so impalpable—her closed eyelids, her face resting on her hand; of the mystery of sleep in its relations with that pure spirit, of what dreams might come to one who was herself a dream. He dared not think beyond, and yet he did. He ventured on those

familiarities which the fancy may indulge in; the notion of how much was feminine in that angelic being disturbed his thoughts. The darkness of night emboldens timid imaginations to take these furtive glances. He was vexed within himself, feeling on reflection as if it were profanity to think of her so boldly; yet still constrained, in spite of himself, he tremblingly gazed into the invisible. He shuddered almost with a sense of pain as he imagined her room—a petticoat on a chair, a mantle fallen on the carpet, a band unbuckled, a handkerchief. He imagined her corset with its lace hanging to the ground, her stockings, her boots. His soul was among the stars.

The stars are made for the human heart of a poor man like Gilliat not less than for that of the rich and great. There is a certain degree of passion by which every man becomes wrapped in a celestial light. With a rough and primitive nature, this truth is even more applicable. An uncultivated mind is easily touched with dreams.

Delight is a fullness which overflows like any other. To see those windows was almost too much happiness for Gilliat.

Suddenly he looked and saw her.

From the branches of a clump of bushes, already thickened by the spring, there issued with a spectral slowness a celestial figure, a dress, a divine face, almost a shining light beneath the moon.

Gilliat felt his powers failing him: it was *Déruchette*.

*Déruchette* approached. She stopped. She walked back a few paces, stopped again; then returned and sat upon the wooden bench. The moon was in the trees, a few clouds floated among the pale stars; the sea murmured to the shadows in an under tone, the town was sleeping, a thin haze was rising from the horizon, the melancholy was profound. *Déruchette* inclined her head, with those thoughtful eyes which look attentive yet see nothing. She was seated sideways, and had nothing on her head but a little cap untied, which showed upon her delicate neck the commencement of her hair. She twirled mechanically a ribbon of her cap around one of her fingers; the half light showed the outline of her hands like those of a statue; her dress was one of those shades which by night look white: the trees stirred as if they felt the enchantment which she shed around her. The tip of one of her feet was visible. Her lowered eyelids had that vague contraction which suggests a tear checked in its course, or a thought suppressed. There was a charming indecision in the movements of her arms, which had no support to lean on; a sort of floating mingled with every posture. It was rather a gleam than a light—rather a grace than a goddess; the folds of her dress were exquisite; her face, which might inspire adoration, seemed meditative, like portraits of the Virgin. It was terrible to think how near she was; Gilliat could hear her breathe.

A nightingale was singing in the distance. The stirring of the wind among the branches set in movement the inexpressible silence of the night. Déruchette, beautiful, divine, appeared in the twilight like a creation from those rays and from the perfumes in the air. That widespread enchantment seemed to concentrate and embody itself mysteriously in her; she became its living manifestation. She seemed the spiritual flower of all that shadow and silence.

But the shadow and silence which floated lightly about her weighed heavily on Gilliatt. He was bewildered; what he experienced is not to be told in words. Emotion is always new, and the word is always enough. Hence the impossibility of expressing emotion. Joy is sometimes overwhelming. To see Déruchette, to see her herself, to see her dress, her cap, her ribbon, which she twined around her finger, was it possible to imagine it? Was it possible to be thus near her; to hear her breathe? She breathed! then the stars might breathe also. Gilliatt felt a thrill through him. He was the most miserable and yet the happiest of men. He knew not what to do. His delirious joy at seeing her annihilated him. Was it indeed Déruchette there, and he so near? His thoughts, bewildered and yet fixed, were fascinated by that figure as by a dazzling jewel. He gazed upon her neck—her hair. He did not even say to himself that all that would now belong to him; that before long—to-morrow, perhaps—he would have the right to take off that cap, to unknott that ribbon. He would not have conceived for a moment the audacity of thinking even so far. Touching in idea is almost like touching with the hand. Love was with Gilliatt like honey to the bear. He thought confusedly; he knew not what possessed him. The nightingale still sang. He felt as if about to breathe his life out.

The idea of rising, of jumping over the wall, of speaking to Déruchette, never came into his mind. If it had, he would have turned and fled. If anything resembling a thought had begun to dawn in his mind, it was this: that Déruchette was there, that he wanted nothing more, and that eternity had begun.

A noise aroused them both—her from her reverie, him from his ecstasy.

Some one was walking in the garden. It was not possible to see who was approaching on account of the trees. It was the footstep of a man.

Déruchette raised her eyes.

The steps drew nearer, then ceased. The person walking had stopped. He must have been quite near. The path beside which was the bench wound between two clumps of trees. The stranger was there in the alley between the trees, at a few paces from the seat.

Accident had so placed the branches that Déruchette could see the new-comer, while Gilliatt could not.

The moon cast on the ground beyond the trees a shadow which reached to the garden seat.

Gilliatt could see this shadow.

He looked at Déruchette.

She was quite pale; her mouth was partly open, as with a suppressed cry of surprise. She had just half risen from the bench, and sunk again upon it. There was in her attitude a mixture of fascination with a desire to fly. Her surprise was enchantment mingled with timidity. She had upon her lips almost the light of a smile, with the fullness of tears in her eyes. She seemed as if transfigured by that presence; as if the being that she saw before her belonged not to this earth. The reflection of an angel was in her look.

The stranger, who was to Gilliatt only a shadow, spoke. A voice issued from the trees, softer than the voice of a woman, and yet it was the voice of a man. Gilliatt heard these words:

"I see you, mademoiselle, every Sunday and every Thursday. They tell me that once you used not to come so often. It is a remark that has been made. I ask your pardon. I have never spoken to you; it was my duty; but I come to speak to you to-day, for it is still my duty. It is right that I speak to you first. The 'Cashmere' sails to-morrow. This is why I have come. You walk every evening in your garden. It would be wrong of me to know your habits so well, if I had not the thought that I have. Mademoiselle, you are poor; since this morning I am rich. Will you have me for your husband?"

Déruchette joined her two hands in a suppliant attitude, and looked at the speaker, silent, with fixed eyes, and trembling from head to foot.

The voice continued:

"I love you. God made not the heart of man to be silent. He has promised him eternity with the intention that he should not be alone. There is for me but one woman upon earth. It is you. I think of you as of a prayer. My faith is in God, and my hope in you. What wings I have you bear. You are my life, and already my supreme happiness."

"Sir," said Déruchette, "there is no one to answer in the house!"

The voice rose again:

"Yes, I have encouraged that dream. Heaven has not forbidden us to dream. You are like a glory in my eyes. I love you deeply, mademoiselle. To me you are holy innocence. I know it is the hour at which your household have retired to rest, but I had no choice of any other moment. Do you remember that passage of the Bible which some one read before us; it was the twenty-fifth chapter of Genesis. I have thought of it often since. M. Hérodé said to me, you must have a rich wife. I replied no, I must have a poor wife. I speak to you, mademoiselle, without venturing to approach you; I would step even further back if it was your wish that my shadow should not touch your feet. You alone are supreme. You will come to me if such is your will. I love and wait. You are the living form of a benediction."

"I did not know, sir," stammered Déruchette,



"that any one remarked me on Sundays and Thursdays."

The voice continued :

"We are powerless against celestial things. The whole Law is love. Marriage is Canaan; you are to me the promised land of beauty."

Déruchette replied, "I did not think I did wrong any more than other persons who are strict."

The voice continued :

"God manifests his will in the flowers, in the light of dawn, in the spring; and love is of his ordaining. You are beautiful in this holy shadow of night. This garden has been tended by you; in its perfumes there is something of your breath. The affinities of our souls do not depend on us. They cannot be counted with our sins. You were there, that was all. I was there, that was all. I did nothing but feel that I loved you. Sometimes my eyes rested upon you. I was wrong, but what could I do? It was through looking at you that all happened. I could not restrain my gaze. There are mysterious impulses which are above our search. The heart is the chief of all temples. To have your spirit in my house—this is the terrestrial paradise for which I hope. Say, will you be mine? As long as I was poor, I spoke not. I know your age. You are twenty-one; I am twenty-six. I go to-morrow; if you refuse me I return no more. Oh, be my betrothed; will you not? More than once have my eyes, in spite of myself, addressed to you that question. I love you; answer me. I will speak to your uncle as soon as he is able to receive me; but I turn first to you. To Rebecca I plead for Rebecca, unless you love me not."

Déruchette hung her head, and murmured,

"Oh! I worship him."

The words were spoken in a voice so low that only Gilliatt heard them.

She remained with her head lowered as if by shading her face she hoped to conceal her thoughts.

There was a pause. No leaf among the trees was stirred. It was that solemn and peaceful moment when the slumber of external things mingles with the sleep of living creatures, and

night seems to listen to the beating of Nature's heart. In the midst of that retirement, like a harmony making the silence more complete, rose the wide murmur of the sea.

The voice was heard again :

"Mademoiselle!"

Déruchette started.

Again the voice spoke.

"You are silent."

"What would you have me say?"

"I wait for your reply."

"God has heard it," said Déruchette.

Then the voice became almost sonorous, and at the same time softer than before, and these words issued from the leaves as from a burning bush :

"You are my betrothed. Come then to me. Let the blue sky, with all its stars, be witness of this taking of my soul to thine, and let our first embrace be mingled with that firmament."

Déruchette arose and remained an instant motionless, looking straight before her, doubtless in another's eyes. Then, with slow steps, with head erect, her arms drooping, but with the fingers of her hands wide apart, like one who leans on some unseen support, she advanced towards the trees, and was out of sight.

A moment afterwards, instead of the one shadow upon the travelled walk, there were two. They mingled together. Gilliatt saw at his feet the embrace of those two shadows.

In certain moments of crisis, time flows from us as his sands from the hour-glass, and we have no feeling of his flight. That pair on the one hand, who were ignorant of the presence of a witness, and saw him not; on the other, that witness of their joy, who could not see them, but who knew of their presence—how many minutes did they remain thus in that mysterious suspension of themselves? It would be impossible to say. Suddenly a noise burst forth at a distance. A voice was heard crying "Help!" and the harbour bell began to sound. It is probable that those celestial transports of delight heard no echo of that tumult.

The bell continued to ring. Any one who had sought Gilliatt then in the angle of the wall would have found him no longer there.

## BOOK II.

## GRATITUDE AND DESPOTISM.

## I.

## JOY SURROUNDED BY TORTURES.

MESS LETHIERRY pulled the bell furiously, then stopped abruptly. A man had just turned the corner of the quay. It was Gilliatt.

Lethierry ran towards him, or rather flung himself upon him; seized his hand between his own, and looked him in the face for a moment silent. It was that silence which precedes an explosion struggling to find an issue.

Then pulling and shaking him with violence, and squeezing him in his arms, he compelled him to enter the lower room of the Bravées, pushed back with his heel the door which had remained half opened, sat down or sank into a chair beside a great table lighted by the moon, the reflection of which gave a vague pallor to Gilliatt's face, and, with a voice of intermingled laughter and tears, cried,

"Ah! my son—my player of the bagpipe! I knew well that it was you. The sloop, *parbleu!* Tell me the story. You went there, then? Why, they would have burnt you a hundred years ago! It is magic! There isn't a screw missing. I have looked at everything already, recognised everything, handled everything. I guessed that the paddles were in the two cases. And here you are once more! I have been looking for you in the little cabin. I rang the bell. I was seeking for you. I said to myself, 'Where is he, that I may devour him?' You must admit that wonderful things do come to pass. He has brought back life to me. *Tonnerre!* you are an angel! Yes, yes, it is my engine. Nobody will believe it; people will see it, and say, 'It can't be true.' Not a tap, not a pin missing. The feed-pipe has never budged an inch. It is incredible that there should have been no more damage. We have only to put a little oil. But how did you accomplish it? To think that the *Durande* will be moving again. The axle of the wheels must have been taken to pieces by some watchmaker. Give me your word that I am not crazy."

He sprang to his feet, breathed a moment, and continued:

"Assure me of that. What a revolution! I pinched myself to be certain I was not dreaming. You are my child, you are my son, you are my Providence. Ah! my lad—to go and fetch my good old engine. In the open sea, among those cut-throat rocks. I have seen some strange things in my life; nothing like that. I have known Parisians who were veritable demons, but I'll defy them to have done that. It beats the Bastille. I have seen the *gauchos* labouring in the *Pampas* with a crook-

ed branch of a tree for a plough, and a bundle of thorn-bushes for a harrow, dragged by a leathern strap; they get harvests of wheat that way, with grains as big as hedgesnuts. But that is a trifle compared with your feats. You have performed a miracle—a real one. Ah! *gredin!* let me hug you. How they will gossip in St. Sampson! I shall set to work at once to build the boat. It is astonishing that the crank is all right. 'Gentlemen, he has been to the Douvres'—I say to the Douvres. 'He went alone.' The Douvres! I defy you to find a worse spot. Do you know—have they told you—that it's proved that Clubin sent the *Durande* to the bottom to swindle me out of money which he had to bring me? He made Tangrouille drunk. It's a long story. I'll tell you another day of his piratical tricks. I, stupid idiot, had confidence in Clubin. But he trapped himself, the villain! for he couldn't have got away. There is a God above, scoundrel! Do you see, Gilliatt, bang! bang! the irons in the fire. We'll begin at once to rebuild the *Durande*. We'll have her twenty feet longer. They build them longer now than they did. I'll buy the wood from Dantzic and Brême. Now I've got the machinery, they will give me credit again. They'll have confidence now."

Mess Lethierry stopped, lifted his eyes with that look which sees the heavens through the roof, and muttered, "Yes, there is a power on high!"

Then he placed the middle finger of his right hand between his two eyebrows, and tapped with his nail there, an action which indicates a project passing through the mind, and he continued:

"Nevertheless, to begin again, on a grand scale, a little ready money would have been useful. Ah! if I only had my three bank-notes—the seventy-five thousand francs that that robber Rantaine returned, and that vagabond Clubin stole."

Gilliatt silently felt in his pocket, and drew out something which he placed before him. It was the leathern belt that he had brought back. He opened, and spread it out upon the table; in the inside the word "Clubin" could be deciphered in the light of the moon. He then took out of the pocket of the belt a box, and out of the box three pieces of paper, which he unfolded and offered to Lethierry.

Lethierry examined them. It was light enough to read the figures "1000," and the word "thousand" was also perfectly visible. Mess Lethierry took the three notes, placed them on the table one beside the other, looked at them, looked at Gilliatt, stood for a moment



dumb, and then began again, like an eruption after an explosion:

"These too! You are a marvel. My bank-notes! all three. A thousand pounds each. My seventy-five thousand francs. Why, you must have gone down to the infernal regions. It is Clubin's belt. Pardieu! I can read his vile name. Gilliatt has brought back engine and money too. There will be something to put in the papers. I will buy some timber of the finest quality. I guess how it was; you found his carcass—Clubin mouldering away in some corner. We'll have some Dantzic pine and Brème oak; we'll have a first-rate plank-ing—oak within, and pine without. In old times they didn't build so well, but their work lasted longer; the wood was better seasoned, because they did not build so much. We'll build the hull perhaps of elm. Elm is good for the parts in the water. To be dry sometimes, and sometimes wet, rots the timbers; the elm requires to be always wet; it's a wood that feeds upon water. What a splendid Durande we'll build. The lawyers will not trouble me again. I shall want no more credit. I have some money of my own. Did ever any one see a man like Gilliatt! I was struck down to the ground; I was a dead man. He comes and sets me up again as firm as ever. And all the while I was never thinking about him. He had gone clean out of my mind; but I recollect everything now. Poor lad! Ah! by the way, you know you are to marry Déruchette."

Gilliatt leaned with his back against the wall like one who staggers, and said, in a tone very low, but distinct,

"No."

Mess Lethierry started.

"How, no!"

Gilliatt replied,

"I do not love her."

Mess Lethierry went to the window, opened and reclosed it, took the three bank-notes, folded them, placed the iron box on top, scratched his head, seized Clubin's belt, flung it violently against the wall, and exclaimed,

"You must be mad."

He thrust his fists into his pockets, and exclaimed,

"You don't love Déruchette? What! was it at me, then, that you used to play the bagpipe?"

Gilliatt, still supporting himself by the wall, turned pale, as a man near his end. As he became pale, Lethierry became redder.

"There's an idiot for you! He doesn't love Déruchette. Very good; make up your mind to love her, for she shall never marry any but you. A devilish pretty story that; and you think that I believe you. If there is anything really the matter with you, send for a doctor, but don't talk nonsense. You can't have had time to quarrel, or get out of temper with her. It is true that lovers are great fools sometimes. Come, now, what are your reasons? If you have any, say.. People don't make geese of

themselves without reasons. But I have wool in my ears; perhaps I didn't understand. Repeat to me what you said."

Gilliatt replied,

"I said No!"

"You said No. He holds to it, the lunatic! You must be crazy. You said No. Here's a stupidity beyond anything ever heard of. Why, people have had their heads shaven for much less than that. What! you don't like Déruchette? Oh, then, it was out of affection for the old man that you did all these things? It was for the sake of papa that you went to the Douvres, that you endured cold and heat, and was half dead with hunger and thirst, and ate the limpets off the rocks, and had the fog, the rain, and the wind for your bedroom, and brought me back my machine, just as you might bring a pretty woman her little canary that had escaped from its cage. And the tempest that we had three days ago! Do you think I don't bear it in mind? You must have had a time of it! It was in the midst of all this misery, alongside of my old craft, that you shaped, and cut, and turned, and twisted, and dragged about, and filed, and sawed, and carpentered, and schemed, and performed more miracles there by yourself than all the saints in paradise. Ah! you annoyed me enough once with your bagpipe. They call it a *biniau* in Brittany. Always the same tune too, silly fellow. And yet you don't love Déruchette? I don't know what is the matter with you. I recollect it all now. I was there in the corner; Déruchette said, 'He shall be my husband;' and so you shall. You don't love her! Either you must be mad, or else I am mad. And you stand there, and speak not a word. I tell you you are not at liberty to do all the things you have done, and then say, after all, 'I don't love Déruchette.' People don't do others services in order to put them in a passion. Well, if you don't marry her, she shall be single all her life. In the first place, I shall want you. You must be the pilot of the Durande. Do you imagine I mean to part with you like that? No, no, my brave boy, I don't let you go. I have got you now; I'll not even listen to you. Where will they find a sailor like you? You are the man I want. But why don't you speak?"

Meanwhile the harbour bell had aroused the household and the neighbourhood. Douce and Grace had risen, and had just entered the lower room, silent and astonished. Grace had a candle in her hand. A group of neighbours, townspeople, sailors, and peasants, who had rushed out of their houses, were outside on the quay, gazing in wonderment at the funnel of the Durande in the sloop. Some, hearing Lethierry's voice in the lower room, began to glide in by the half-opened door. Between the faces of two worthy old women appeared that of Sieur Landoy, who had the good fortune always to find himself where he would have regretted to have been absent.

Men feel a satisfaction in having witnesses

of their joys. The sort of scattered support which a crowd presents pleases them at such times; their delight draws new life from it. Mess Lethierry suddenly perceived that there were persons about him, and he welcomed the audience at once.

"Ah! you are here, my friends. I am very glad to see you. You know the news? That man has been there, and brought it back. How d'ye do, *Sieur Landoy*? When I woke up just now, the first thing I spied was the funnel. It was under my window. There's not a nail missing. They make pictures of Napoleon's deeds, but I think more of that than of the battle of Austerlitz. You have just left your beds, my good friends. The *Durande* has found you sleeping. While you are putting on your night-caps and blowing out your caudles, there are others working like heroes. We are a set of cowards and donthings; we sit at home rubbing our rheumatisms; but happily that does not prevent there being some of another stamp. The man of the *Bû de la Rue* has arrived from the *Douvres* rocks. He has fished up the *Durande* from the bottom of the sea, and fished up my money out of *Clubin*'s pocket from a greater depth still. But how did you contrive to do it? All the powers of darkness were against you—the wind and the sea—the sea and the wind. It's true enough that you are a sorcerer. Those who say that are not so stupid after all. The *Durande* is back again. The tempests may rage now; that cuts the ground from under them. My friends, I can inform you that there was no shipwreck after all. I have examined all the machinery. It is like new, perfect. The valves go as easily as rollers. You would think them made yesterday. You know that the waste water is carried away by a tube inside another tube, through which comes the water for the boilers; this was to economize the heat. Well, the two tubes are there as good as ever. The complete engine, in fact. She is all there, her wheels and all. Ah! you shall marry her."

"Marry the complete engine?" asked *Sieur Landoy*.

"No—*Déruchette*; yes—the engine. Both of them. He shall be my double son-in-law. He shall be her captain. Good-day, Captain *Gilliatt*; for there will soon be a captain of the *Durande*. We are going to do a world of business again. There will be trade, circulation, cargoes of oxen and sheep. I wouldn't give *St. Sampson* for *London* now. And there stands the author of all this. It was a curious adventure, I can tell you. You will read about it on Saturday in old *Mauger's 'Gazette.'* Malicious *Gilliatt* is very malicious. What's the meaning of these *Louis-d'ors* here?"

Mess Lethierry had just observed, through the opening of the lid, that there was some gold in the box upon the notes. He seized it, opened and emptied it into the palm of his hand, and put the handful of guineas on the table.

"For the poor, *Sieur Landoy*. Give those

sovereigns from me to the constable of *St. Sampson*. You recollect *Rantaine's* letter? I showed it to you. Very well; I've got the bank-notes. Now we can buy some oak and fir, and go to work at carpentering. Look you! Do you remember the weather of three days ago? What a hurricane of wind and rain! *Gilliatt* endured all that upon the *Douvres*. That didn't prevent his taking the wreck to pieces, as I might take my watch. Thanks to him, I am on my legs again. Old '*Lethierry's* galley' is going to run again, ladies and gentlemen. A nut-shell with a couple of wheels and a funnel. I always had that idea. I used to say to myself, one day I will do it. That was a good long time back. It was an idea that came in my head at *Paris*, at the coffee-house at the corner of the *Rue Christine* and the *Rue Dauphine*, when I was reading a paper which had an account of it. Do you know that *Gilliatt* would think nothing of putting the machine at *Marly* in his pocket, and walking about with it? He is wrought iron, that man; tempered steel, a mariner of invaluable qualities, an excellent smith, an extraordinary fellow, more astonishing than the Prince of *Hohenlohe*. That is what I call a man with brains. We are children by the side of him. Sea-wolves we may think ourselves, but the sea-lion is there. Hurrah for *Gilliatt*! I do not know how he has done it, but certainly he must have been the devil, and how can I do other than give him *Déruchette*?"

For some minutes *Déruchette* had been in the long room. She had not spoken or moved since she entered. She had glided in like a shadow, had sat down almost unperceived behind Mess Lethierry, who stood before her, loquacious, stormy, joyful, abounding in gestures, and talking in a loud voice. A little while after her another silent apparition had appeared. A man attired in black, with a white cravat, holding his hat in his hand, stood in the doorway. There were now several candles among the group, which had gradually increased in number. These lights were near the man attired in black. His profile and youthful and pleasing complexion showed itself against the dark background with the clearness of an engraving on a medal. He leaned with his shoulder against the framework of the door, and held his left hand to his forehead, an attitude of unconscious grace, which contrasted the breadth of his forehead with the smallness of his hand. There was an expression of anguish in his contracted lips as he looked on and listened with profound attention. The standers-by having recognised *M. Caudray*, the rector of the parish, had fallen back to allow him to pass; but he remained upon the threshold. There was hesitation in his posture, but decision in his looks, which now and then met those of *Déruchette*. With regard to *Gilliatt*, whether by chance or design, he was in shadow, and was only perceived indistinctly.

At first Mess Lethierry did not observe Cau-



dray, but he saw Déruchette. He went to her and kissed her fervently upon the forehead, stretching forth his hand at the same time towards the dark corner where Gilliatt was standing.

"Déruchette," he said, "we are rich again, and there is your future husband."

Déruchette raised her head, and looked into the darkness bewildered.

Mess Lethierry continued:

"The marriage shall take place immediately, if it can; they shall have a license; the formalities here are not very troublesome; the Dean can do what he pleases; people are married before they have time to turn round. It is not as in France, where you must have bans, and publications, and delays, and all that fuss. You will be able to boast of being the wife of a brave man, whom no one can say a word against. I thought of him from the day when I saw him come back from Herm with the little cannon. But now he comes back from the Douvres with his fortune and mine, and the fortune of this country—a man of whom the world will talk a great deal more one day. You said once, 'I will marry him;' and you shall marry him, and you shall have little children, and I will be grandpapa; and you will have the good fortune to be the wife of a noble fellow, who can work, who can be useful to his fellow-men; a surprising fellow, worth a hundred others; a man who can rescue other people's inventions—a providence! At all events, you will not have married, like so many other silly girls about here, a soldier or a priest—that is, a man who kills or a man who lies. But what are you doing there, Gilliatt? Nobody can see you. Douce, Grace, everybody there! Bring a light, I say. Light up my son-in-law for me. I betroth you to each other, my children: here stands your husband, here my son, Gilliatt of the Bû de la Rue, that noble fellow, that great seaman; I will have no other son-in-law, and you no other husband. I pledge my word once more in God's name. Ah! you are there, Monsieur the Curé. You will marry these young people for us."

Lethierry's eye had just fallen upon Caudray.

Douce and Grace had done as they were directed. Two candles placed upon the table cast a light upon Gilliatt from head to foot.

"There's a fine fellow," said Mess Lethierry.

Gilliatt's appearance was hideous.

He was in the condition in which he had that morning set sail from the rocks—in rags, his bare elbows showing through his sleeves, his beard long, his hair rough and wild, his eyes bloodshot, his skin peeling, his hands covered with wounds, his feet naked. Some of the blisters left by the devil-fish were still visible upon his hairy arms.

Lethierry gazed at him.

"This is my son-in-law," he said. "How he has struggled with the sea! He is all in rags. What shoulders! what hands! There's a splendid fellow!"

Grace ran to Déruchette and supported her head. She had fainted.

## II.

### THE LEATHERN TRUNK.

At break of day St. Sampson was on foot, and all the people of St. Peter's Port began to arrive there. The resurrection of the Durande caused a commotion in the island not unlike what was caused by the "Salette" in the south of France. There was a crowd on the quay staring at the funnel standing erect in the sloop. They were anxious to see and handle the machinery; but Lethierry, after making a new and triumphant survey of the whole by daylight, had placed two sailors aboard, with instructions to prevent any one approaching it. The funnel, however, furnished food enough for contemplation. The crowd gaped with astonishment. They talked of nothing but Gilliatt. They remarked on his surname of "malicious Gilliatt," and their admiration wound up with the remark, "It is not pleasant to have people in the island who can do things like that."

Mess Lethierry was seen from outside the house, seated at a table before the window, writing, with one eye on the paper and another on the sloop. He was so completely absorbed that he had only once stopped to call Douce and ask after Déruchette. Douce replied, "Mademoiselle has risen and is gone out." Mess Lethierry replied, "She is right to take the air. She was a little unwell last night, owing to the heat. There was a crowd in the room. This and her surprise and joy, and the windows being all closed, overcame her. She will have a husband to be proud of." And he had gone on with his writing. He had already finished and sealed two letters, addressed to the most important ship-builders at Brême. He now finished the sealing of a third.

The noise of a wheel upon the quay induced him to look up. He leaned out of the window, and observed, coming from the path which led to the Bû de la Rue, a boy pushing a wheelbarrow. The boy was going towards St. Peter's Port. In the barrow was a portmanteau of brown leather, studded with nails of brass and white metal.

Mess Lethierry called to the boy:

"Where are you going, my lad?"

The boy stopped and replied,

"To the 'Cashmere.'"

"What for?"

"To take this trunk aboard."

"Very good; you shall take these three letters too."

Mess Lethierry opened the drawer of his table, took a piece of string, tied the three letters which he had just written across and across, and threw the packet to the boy, who caught it between his hands.

"Tell the captain of the 'Cashmere' they are

my letters, and to take care of them. They are for Germany—Brème *via* London."

"I can't speak to the captain, Mess Lethierry."

"Why not?"

"The 'Cashmere' is not abreast of the quay."

"Ah!"

"She is in the roads."

"Ay, true—on account of the sea."

"I can only speak to the man who takes the things aboard."

"You will tell him, then, to look to the letters."

"Very well, Mess Lethierry."

"At what time does the 'Cashmere' sail?"

"At twelve."

"The tide will flow at noon; she will have it against her."

"But she will have the wind," answered the lad.

"Boy," said Mess Lethierry, pointing with his fore finger at the engine in the sloop, "do you see that? There is something which laughs at winds and tides."

The boy put the letters in his pocket, took up the handles of the barrow again, and went

on his way towards the town. Mess Lethierry called "Douce! Grace!"

Grace opened the door a little way.

"What is it, Mess?"

"Come in and wait a moment."

Mess Lethierry took a sheet of paper and began to write. If Grace, standing behind him, had been curious, and had leaned forward while he was writing, she might have read as follows:

"I have written to Brème for the timber. I have appointments all the morning with carpenters for the estimate. The rebuilding will go on fast. You must go yourself to the Deanery for a license. It is my wish that the marriage should take place as soon as possible; immediately would be better. I am busy about the Durande. Do you be busy about Déruchette."

He dated it and signed "Lethierry." He did not take the trouble to seal it, but merely folded it in four and handed it to Grace, saying,

"Take that to Gilliatt."

"To the Bû de la Rue?"

"To the Bû de la Rue."

## BOOK III.

### THE DEPARTURE OF THE "CASHMERE."

#### I.

##### THE CREEK NEAR THE CHURCH.

WHEN there is a crowd at St. Sampson, St. Peter's Port is soon deserted. A point of curiosity at a given place is like an air-pump. News travels fast in small places. Going to see the funnel of the Durande under Mess Lethierry's window had been, since sunrise, the business of the Guernsey folks. Every other event was eclipsed by this. The death of the Dean of St. Asaph was forgotten, together with the question of the Reverend Mr. Caudray, his sudden riches, and the departure of the "Cashmere." The machinery of the Durande brought back from the Douvres rocks was the order of the day. People were incredulous. The shipwreck had appeared extraordinary, the salvage seemed impossible. Everybody hastened to assure himself of the truth by the help of his own eyes. Business of every kind was suspended. Long strings of townfolk with their families, from the "Vesin" up to the "Mess," men and women, gentlemen, mothers with children, infants with dolls, were coming by every road or pathway to see "the thing to be seen" at the Bravées, turning their backs upon St. Peter's Port. Many shops at St. Peter's Port were closed. In the Commercial Arcade there was an absolute stagnation in buying and selling. The Durande alone obtained attention. Not a single shopkeeper had had a "handsell" that morning, except a jeweller, who was surprised at having sold

a wedding-ring to "a sort of a man who appeared in a great hurry, and who asked for the house of the Dean." The shops which remained open were centres of gossip, where loiterers discussed the miraculous salvage. There was not a foot-passenger at the "Hyvreuse," which is known in these days, nobody knows why, as Cambridge Park; no one in the High Street, then called the "Grande Rue;" nor in Smith Street, known then only as the Rue des Forges; nobody in Hauteville. The Esplanade itself was deserted. One might have guessed it to be Sunday. A visit from a royal personage to review the militia at the Ancrese could not have emptied the town more completely. All this hubbub about "a nobody" like Gilliatt caused a good deal of shrugging of the shoulders among persons of grave and correct habits.

The church of St. Peter's Port, with its three gable-ends placed side by side, its transept and its steeple, stands at the water's side at the end of the harbour, and nearly on the landing-place itself, where it welcomes those who arrive and gives the departing "God speed." It represents the capital letter at the beginning of that long line which forms the front of the town towards the sea.

It is both the parish church of St. Peter's Port and the chief place of the Deanery of the whole island. Its officiating minister is the surrogate of the bishop, a clergyman in full orders.

The harbour of St. Peter's Port, a very fine and large port at the present day, was at that



epoch, and even up to ten years ago, less considerable than the harbour of St. Sampson. It was enclosed by two enormous thick walls, beginning at the water's edge on both sides, and curving till they almost joined again at the extremities, where there stood a little white lighthouse. Under this lighthouse, a narrow gullet, bearing still the two rings of the chain with which it was the custom to bar the passage in ancient times, formed the entrance for vessels. The harbour of St. Peter's Port might be well compared with the claw of a huge lobster opened a little way. This kind of pincers took from the ocean a portion of the sea, which it compelled to remain calm. But during the easterly winds the waves rolled heavily against the narrow entrance, the port was agitated, and it was better not to enter. This is what had happened with the "Cashmere" that day, which had accordingly anchored in the roads.

The vessels, too, during the easterly winds, preferred this course, which besides saved them the port dues. On these occasions, the boatmen of the town, a hardy race of mariners whom the new port has thrown out of employment, came in their boats to fetch passengers at the landing-place or at stations on the shore, and carried them with their luggage, often in heavy seas, but always without accident, to the vessels about to sail. The east wind blows off the shore, and is very favourable for the passage to England; the vessel at such times rolls, but does not pitch.

When a vessel happened to be in the port, everybody embarked from the quay. When it was in the roads they took their choice, and embarked from any point of the coast near the moorings.

The "Havelet" was one of these creeks. This little harbour (which is the signification of the word) was near the town, but was so solitary that it seemed far off. This solitude was owing to the shelter of the high cliffs of Fort St. George, which overlooked this retired inlet. The "Havelet" was accessible by several paths. The most direct was along the water's side. It had the advantage of leading to the town and to the church in five minutes' walk, and the disadvantage of being covered by the sea twice a day. The other paths were more or less abrupt, and led down to the creek through gaps in the steep rocks. Even in broad daylight it was dusk in the Havelet. Huge blocks overhanging it on all sides, and thick bushes and brambles, cast a sort of soft twilight upon the rocks and waves below. Nothing could be more peaceful than this spot in calm weather; nothing more tumultuous during heavy seas. There were ends of branches there which were always wet with the foam. In the spring-time the place was full of flowers, of nests, of perfumes, of birds, of butterflies, and bees. Thanks to recent improvements, this wild nook no longer exists. Fine, straight lines have taken the place of these wild features; masonry, quays, and little gardens have made their appearance;

earth-work has been the rage, and taste has finally subdued the eccentricities of the cliff, and the irregularities of the rocks below.

## II.

### DESPAIR CONFRONTS DESPAIR.

It was a little before ten o'clock in the morning. The crowd at St. Sampson, according to all appearance, was increasing. The multitude, feverish with curiosity, was moving towards the north; and the Havelet, which is in the south, was more deserted than ever.

Notwithstanding this, there was a boat there and a boatman. In the boat was a travelling-bag. The boatman seemed to be expecting some one.

The "Cashmere" was visible at anchor in the roads, as she did not start till midday; there was as yet no sign of moving aboard.

A passer-by, who had listened from one of the ladder-paths up the cliffs overhead, would have heard a murmur of words in the Havelet, and if he had leaned over the overhanging cliff might have seen, at some distance from the boat, in a corner among the rocks and branches, where the eye of the boatman could not reach them, a man and a woman. It was Caudray and Déruchette.

These obscure nooks on the sea-shore, the chosen places of lady bathers, are not always so solitary as is believed. Persons are sometimes observed and heard there. Those who seek shelter and solitude in them may easily be followed through the thick bushes, and, thanks to the multiplicity and entanglement of the paths, the granite and the shrubs which favour the stolen interview may also favour the witness.

Caudray and Déruchette stood face to face, looking into each other's eyes, and holding each other by the hand. Déruchette was speaking. Caudray was silent. A tear that had gathered upon his eyelash hung there and did not fall.

Grief and strong passion were imprinted in his calm, religious countenance. A painful resignation was there too—a resignation hostile to faith, though springing from it. Upon that face, simply devout until then, there was the commencement of a fatal expression. He who had hitherto meditated only on doctrine, had begun to meditate on Fate, an unhealthy meditation for a priest. Faith dissolves under its action. Nothing disturbs the religious mind more than that bending under the weight of the unknown. Life seems a perpetual succession of events, to which man submits. We never know from which direction the sudden blow will come. Misery and happiness enter or make their exit like unexpected guests. Their laws, their orbit, their principle of gravitation, are beyond man's grasp. Virtue conducts not to happiness, nor crime to retribution; conscience has one logic, fate another; and neither

coincide. Nothing is foreseen. We live confusedly, and from hand to mouth. Conscience is the straight line, life is the whirlwind, which creates above man's head either black chaos or the blue sky. Fate does not practice the art of transitions. Her wheel turns sometimes so fast that we can scarcely distinguish the interval between one revolution and another, or the link between yesterday and to-day. Caudray was a believer whose faith did not exclude reason, and whose priestly training did not shut him out from passion. Those religious systems which impose celibacy on the priesthood are not without reason for it. Nothing really destroys the individuality of the priest more than love. All sorts of clouds seemed to darken Caudray's soul. He looked too long into Déruchette's eyes. These two beings worshipped each other.

There was in Caudray's eye the mute adoration of despair.

Déruchette spoke:

"You must not leave me. I shall not have strength. I thought I could bid you farewell. I cannot. Why did you come yesterday? You should not have come if you were going so soon. I never spoke to you. I loved you, but knew it not. Only that day, when M. Hérode read to us the story of Rebecca, and when your eyes met mine, my cheeks were like fire, and I thought only of how Rebecca's face must have burnt like mine; and yet, if any one had told me yesterday that I loved you, I might have laughed at it. This is what is so terrible. It has been like a treason. I did not take heed. I went to the church, I saw you, I thought everybody there was like myself. I do not reproach you; you did nothing to make me love you; you did nothing but look at me; it is not your fault if you look at people; and yet that made me love you so much. I did not even suspect it. When you took up the book it was a flood of light; when others took it, it was but a book. You raised your eyes sometimes; you spoke of archangels; oh! you were my archangel. What you said penetrated my thoughts at once. Before then, I know not even whether I believed in God. Since I have known you, I have learnt to pray. I used to say to Douce, dress me quickly, lest I should be late at the service; and I hastened to the church. Such it was with me to love some one. I did not know the cause. I said to myself, how devout I am becoming. It is from you that I have learnt that I do not go to church for God's service. It is true; I went for your sake. You spoke so well, and when you raised your arms to heaven, you seemed to hold my heart within your two white hands. I was foolish, but I did not know it. Shall I tell you your fault? It was your coming to me in the garden; it was your speaking to me. If you had said nothing, I should have known nothing. If you had gone, I should, perhaps, have been sad, but now I should die. Since I know that I love you, you cannot leave me. Of what are you thinking? You do not seem to listen to me."

Caudray replied,

"You heard what was said last night?"

"Ah me!"

"What can I do against that?"

They were silent for a moment. Caudray continued:

"There is but one duty left to me. It is to fly."

"And mine to die. Oh! how I wish there was no sea, but only sky. It seems to me as if that would settle all, and that our departure would be the same. It was wrong to speak to me; why did you speak to me? Do not go. What will become of me? I tell you I shall die. You will be far off when I shall be in my grave. Oh! my heart will break. I am very wretched; yet my uncle is not unkind."

It was the first time in her life that Déruchette had ever said "my uncle." Until then she had always said "my father."

Caudray stepped back, and made a sign to the boatman. Déruchette heard the sound of the boat-hook among the shingle, and the step of the man on the gunwale of the boat.

"No! no!" cried Déruchette.

"It must be, Déruchette," replied Caudray.

"No! never! For the sake of an engine—impossible. Did you see that horrible man last night? You cannot abandon me thus. You are wise; you can find a means. It is impossible that you bade me come here this morning with the idea of leaving me. I have never done anything to deserve this; you can have no reproach to make me. Is it by that vessel that you intended to sail? I will not let you go. You shall not leave me. Heaven does not open thus to close so soon. I know you will remain. Besides, it is not yet time. Oh! how I love you!"

And pressing closely to him, she interlaced the fingers of each hand behind his neck, as if partly to make a bond of her two arms for detaining him, and partly with her joined hands to pray. He moved away this gentle restraint, while Déruchette resisted as long as she could.

Déruchette sank upon a projection of the rock covered with ivy, lifting by an unconscious movement the sleeve of her dress up to the elbow, and exhibiting her graceful arm. A pale suffused light was in her eyes. The boat was approaching.

Caudray held her head between his hands. He touched her hair with a sort of religious care, fixed his eyes upon her for some moments, then kissed her on the forehead fervently, and in an accent trembling with anguish, and in which might have been traced the uprooting of his soul, he uttered the word which has so often resounded in the depths of the human heart, "Farewell!"

Déruchette burst into loud sobs.

At this moment they heard a voice near them, which said solemnly and deliberately,

"Why should you not be man and wife?"

Caudray raised his head. Déruchette looked up.



Gilliat stood before them.

He had approached by a by-path.

He was no longer the same man that he had appeared on the previous night. He had arranged his hair, shaved his beard, put on shoes and a white shirt, with a large collar turned over sailor fashion. He wore a sailor's costume, but all was new. A gold ring was on his little finger. He seemed profoundly calm. His sunburnt skin had become pale; a line of sickly bronze overspread it.

They looked at him astonished. Though so changed, Déruchette recognised him. But the words which he had spoken were so far from what was passing in their minds at that moment, that they had left no distinct impression.

Gilliat spoke again:

"Why should you say farewell? Make yourselves man and wife, and go together."

Déruchette started. A trembling seized her from head to foot.

Gilliat continued:

"Miss Lethierry is a woman. She is of age. It depends only on herself. Her uncle is but her uncle. You love each other—"

Déruchette interrupted in a gentle voice, and asked, "How came you here?"

"Make yourselves one," repeated Gilliat.

Déruchette began to have a sense of the meaning of his words. She stammered out,

"My poor uncle!"

"If the marriage was yet to be," said Gilliat, "he would refuse. When it is over, he will consent. Besides, you are going to leave here. When you return, he will forgive."

Gilliat added, with a slight touch of bitterness, "And then he is thinking of nothing just now but the rebuilding of his boat. This will occupy his mind during your absence. The Durande will console him."

"I cannot," said Déruchette, in a state of stupor which was not without its gleam of joy, "I must not leave him unhappy."

"It will be but for a short time," answered Gilliat.

Caudray and Déruchette had been, as it were, bewildered. They recovered themselves now. The meaning of Gilliat's words became plainer as their surprise diminished. There was a slight cloud still before them, but their part was not to resist. We yield easily to those who come to save. Objections to a return into Paradise are weak. There was something in the attitude of Déruchette, as she leaned imperceptibly upon her lover, which seemed to make common cause with Gilliat's words. The enigma of the presence of this man, and of his words, which, in the mind of Déruchette in particular, produced various kinds of astonishment, was a thing apart. He said to them, "Be man and wife!" This was clear. If there was responsibility, it was his. Déruchette had a confused feeling that, for many reasons, he had the right to decide upon her fate. Caudray murmured, as if plunged in thought, "An uncle is not a father."

His resolution was corrupted by the sudden and happy turn in his ideas. The probable scruples of the clergyman melted, and dissolved in his heart's love for Déruchette.

Gilliat's tone became abrupt and harsh, and like the pulsations of fever.

"There must be no delay," he said. "You have time, but that is all. Come."

Caudray observed him attentively, and suddenly exclaimed,

"I recognise you. It was you who saved my life."

Gilliat replied,

"I think not."

"Yonder," said Caudray, "at the extremity of the Banques."

"I do not know the place," said Gilliat.

"It was on the very day that I arrived here."

"Let us lose no time," interrupted Gilliat.

"And if I am not deceived, you are the man whom we met last night."

"Perhaps."

"What is your name?"

Gilliat raised his voice,

"Boatman! wait there for us. We shall return soon. You asked me, Miss Lethierry, how I came to be here. The answer is very simple. I walked behind you. You are twenty-one. In this country, when persons are of age, and depend only on themselves, they may be married immediately. Let us take the path along the water-side. It is passable; the tide will not rise here till noon. But lose no time. Come with me."

Déruchette and Caudray seemed to consult each other by a glance. They were standing close together motionless. They were intoxicated—with joy. There are strange hesitations sometimes on the edge of the abyss of happiness. They understood, as it were, without understanding.

"His name is Gilliat," whispered Déruchette.

Gilliat interrupted with a sort of tone of authority.

"What do you linger for?" he asked. "I tell you to follow me."

"Whither?" asked Caudray.

"There!"

And Gilliat pointed with his finger towards the spire of the church.

Gilliat walked on before, and they followed him. His step was firm, but they walked unsteadily.

As they approached the church, an expression dawned upon those two pure and beautiful countenances which was soon to become a smile. The approach to the church lighted them up. In the hollow eyes of Gilliat there was the darkness of night. The beholder might have imagined that he saw a spectre leading two souls to Paradise.

Caudray and Déruchette scarcely took count of what had happened. The interposition of this man was like the branch clutched at by the drowning. They followed their guide with the

docility of despair, leaning on the first comer. Those who feel themselves near death easily accept the accident which seems to save. Déruchette, more ignorant of life, was more confident. Caudray was thoughtful. Déruchette was of age, it was true. The English formalities of marriage are simple, especially in primitive parts, where the clergyman has almost a discretionary power; but would the Dean consent to celebrate the marriage without even inquiring whether the uncle consented? This was the question. Nevertheless, they could learn. In any case there would be but a delay.

But what was this man? and if it was really he whom Lethierry the night before had declared should be his son-in-law, what could be the meaning of his actions? The very obstacle itself had become a providence. Caudray yielded, but his yielding was only the rapid and tacit assent of a man who feels himself saved from despair.

The pathway was uneven, and sometimes wet and difficult to pass. Caudray, absorbed in thought, did not observe the occasional pools of water or the heaps of shingle. But from time to time Gilliatt turned and said to him, "Take heed of those stones. Give her your hand."

### III.

#### THE FORETHOUGHT OF SELF-SACRIFICE.

It struck ten as they entered the church.

By reason of the early hour, and also on account of the desertion of the town that day, the church was empty.

At the farther end, however, near the table which in the Reformed Church fulfils the place of the altar, there were three persons. They were the Dean, his evangelist, and the registrar. The Dean, who was the Reverend Jaquemin Hérode, was seated; the evangelist and the registrar stood beside him.

A book was open upon the table.

Beside him, upon a credence-table, was another book. It was the parish register, and also open; and an attentive eye might have remarked a page on which was some writing, of which the ink was not yet dry. By the side of the register were a pen and a writing-desk.

The Reverend Jaquemin Hérode rose on perceiving Caudray.

"I have been expecting you," he said. "All is ready."

The Dean, in fact, wore his officiating robes.

Caudray looked towards Gilliatt.

The reverend Dean added, "I am at your service, brother;" and he bowed.

It was a bow which neither turned to right or left. It was evident, from the direction of the Dean's gaze, that he did not recognise the existence of any one but Caudray, for Caudray was a clergyman and a gentleman. Neither Déruchette, who stood aside, nor Gilliatt, who

was in the rear, were included in the salutation. His look was a sort of parenthesis, in which none but Caudray were admitted. The observance of these little niceties constitutes an important feature in the maintenance of order and the preservation of society.

The Dean continued, with a graceful and dignified urbanity,

"I congratulate you, my colleague, from a double point of view. You have lost your uncle, and are about to take a wife; you are blessed with riches on the one hand, and happiness on the other. Moreover, thanks to the boat which they are about to rebuild, Mess Lethierry will also be rich, which is as it should be. Miss Lethierry was born in this parish; I have verified the date of her birth in the register. She is of age, and at her own disposal. Her uncle, too, who is her only relative, consents. You are anxious to be united immediately on account of your approaching departure. This I can understand; but this being the marriage of the rector of the parish, I should have been gratified to have seen it associated with a little more solemnity. I will consult your wishes by not detaining you longer than necessary. The essentials will be soon complied with. The form is already drawn up in the register, and it requires only the names to be filled in. By the terms of the law and custom, the marriage may be celebrated immediately after the inscription. The declaration necessary for the license has been duly made. I take upon myself a slight irregularity, for the application for the license ought to have been registered seven days in advance; but I yield to necessity and the urgency of your departure. Be it so, then. I will proceed with the ceremony. My evangelist will be the witness for the bridegroom; as regards the witness for the bride—"

The Dean turned towards Gilliatt. Gilliatt made a movement of his head.

"That is sufficient," said the Dean.

Caudray remained motionless; Déruchette was happy, but no less powerless to move.

"Nevertheless," continued the Dean, "there is still an obstacle."

Déruchette started.

The Dean continued:

"The representative here present of Mess Lethierry applied for the license for you, and has signed the declaration on the register." And with the thumb of his left hand the Dean pointed to Gilliatt, which prevented the necessity of his remembering his name. "The messenger from Mess Lethierry," he added, "has informed me this morning that, being too much occupied to come in person, Mess Lethierry desired that the marriage should take place immediately. This desire, expressed verbally, is not sufficient. In consequence of having to grant the license, and of the irregularity which I take upon myself, I cannot proceed so rapidly without informing myself from Mess Lethierry personally, unless some one can pro-



duce his signature. Whatever might be my desire to serve you, I cannot be satisfied with a mere message. I must have some written document."

"That need not delay us," said Gilliatt. And he presented a paper to the Dean. The Dean took it, perused it by a glance, seemed to pass over some lines as unimportant, and read aloud: "Go to the Dean for the license. I wish the marriage to take place as soon as possible. Immediately would be better."

He placed the paper on the table, and proceeded:

"It is signed Lethierry. It would have been more respectful to have addressed himself to me. But, since I am called on to serve a colleague, I ask no more."

Caudray glanced again at Gilliatt. There are moments when mind and mind comprehend each other with marvellous clearness. Caudray felt that there was some deception; he had not the strength of purpose, perhaps he had not the idea of revealing it. Whether in obedience to a latent heroism, of which he had begun to obtain a glimpse, or whether from a deadening of the conscience, arising from the suddenness of the happiness placed within his reach, he uttered no word.

The Dean took the pen, and, aided by the clerk, filled up the spaces in the page of the register; then he rose, and by a gesture invited Caudray and Déruchette to approach the table.

The ceremony commenced. It was a strange moment. Caudray and Déruchette stood beside each other before the minister. He who has ever dreamed of a marriage in which he himself was chief actor may conceive something of the feeling which they experienced.

Gilliatt stood at a little distance in the shadow of the pillars.

Déruchette, on rising in the morning, desperate, thinking only of death and its associations, had dressed herself in white. Her attire, which had been associated in her mind with mourning, was suited to her nuptials. A white dress is all that is necessary for the bride.

A ray of happiness was visible upon her face. Never had she appeared more beautiful. Her features were remarkable for prettiness rather than what is called beauty. Their fault, if fault it be, lay in a certain excess of grace. Déruchette in repose, that is, neither disturbed by passion or grief, was graceful above all. The ideal Virgin is the transfiguration of a face like this. Déruchette, touched by her sorrow and her love, seemed to have caught that higher and more holy expression. It was the difference between the field daisy and the lily.

The tears had scarcely dried upon her cheeks; one perhaps still lingered in the midst of her smiles. Traces of tears indistinctly visible form a sweet but sombre accompaniment of joy.

The Dean, standing near the table, placed his finger upon the open book, and asked in a distinct voice whether they knew of any impediment to their union.

There was no reply.

"Amen!" said the Dean.

Caudray and Déruchette advanced a step or two towards the table.

"Joseph Ebenezer Caudray, wilt thou have this woman to be thy wedded wife?"

Caudray replied "I will."

The Dean continued:

"Durande Déruchette Lethierry, wilt thou have this man to be thy wedded husband?"

Déruchette, in an agony of soul, springing from her excess of happiness, murmured rather than uttered, "I will."

Then followed the beautiful form of the Anglican marriage service. The Dean looked around, and in the twilight of the church uttered the solemn words,

"Who giveth this woman to be married to this man?"

Gilliatt answered, "I do!"

There was an interval of silence. Caudray and Déruchette felt a vague sense of oppression in spite of their joy.

The Dean placed Déruchette's right hand in Caudray's, and Caudray repeated after him,

"I take thee, Durande Déruchette, to be my wedded wife, for better for worse, for richer for poorer, in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish till death do us part; and thereto I plight thee my troth."

The Dean then placed Caudray's right hand in that of Déruchette, and Déruchette said after him,

"I take thee to be my wedded husband, for better for worse, for richer for poorer, in sickness or in health, to love and to cherish till death do us part; and thereto I plight thee my troth."

The Dean asked, "Where is the ring?" The question took them by surprise. Caudray had no ring; but Gilliatt took off the gold ring which he wore upon his little finger. It was probably the wedding-ring which had been sold that morning by the jeweller in the Commercial Arcade.

The Dean placed the ring upon the book, then handed it to Caudray, who took Déruchette's little trembling left hand, passed the ring over her fourth finger, and said,

"With this ring I thee wed!"

"In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost," continued the Dean.

"Amen," said his evangelist.

Then the Dean said, "Let us pray."

Caudray and Déruchette turned towards the table and knelt down.

Gilliatt, standing by, inclined his head.

So they knelt before God, while he seemed to bend under the burden of his fate.

#### IV.

"FOR YOUR WIFE WHEN YOU MARRY."

As they left the church they could see the "Cashmere" making preparations for her departure.

"You are in time," said Gilliatt.

They chose again the path leading to the Hævet.

Caudray and Déruchette went before, Gilliatt this time walking behind them. They were two somnambulists. Their bewilderment had not passed away, but only changed in form. They took no heed of whither they were going or of what they did. They hurried on mechanically, scarcely remembering the existence of anything, feeling that they were united forever, but scarcely able to connect two ideas in their minds. In ecstasy like theirs it is as impossible to think as it is to swim in a torrent. In the midst of their trouble and darkness they had been plunged in a whirlpool of delight; they bore a paradise within themselves. They did not speak, but conversed with each other by the mysterious sympathy of their souls. Déruchette pressed Caudray's arm to her side.

The footsteps of Gilliatt behind them reminded them now and then that he was there. They were deeply moved, but could find no words. The excess of emotion results in stupor. Theirs was delightful, but overwhelming. They were man and wife; every other idea was postponed to that. What Gilliatt had done was well; that was all they could grasp. They felt towards their guide a deep but vague gratitude in their hearts. Déruchette felt that there was some mystery to be explained, but not now. Meanwhile they accepted their unexpected happiness. They felt themselves controlled by the abruptness and decision of this man who conferred on them so much happiness with a kind of authority. To question him, to talk with him seemed impossible. Too many impressions rushed into their minds at once for that. Their absorption was complete.

Events succeed each other sometimes with the rapidity of hailstones. Their effect is overpowering; they deaden the senses. Falling upon existences habitually calm, they render incidents rapidly unintelligible even to those whom they chiefly concern; we become scarcely conscious of our own adventures; we are overwhelmed without guessing the cause, or crowned with happiness without comprehending it. For some hours Déruchette had been subjected to every kind of emotion: at first, surprise and delight at meeting Caudray in the garden; then horror at the monster whom her uncle had presented as her husband; then her anguish when the angel of her dreams spread his wings and seemed about to depart; and now her joy, a joy such as she had never known, founded on an inexplicable enigma; the monster of last night himself restoring her lover; marriage arising out of her torture; this Gilliatt, the evil destiny of last night, become to-day her saviour! She could explain nothing to her own mind. It was evident that all the morning Gilliatt had had no other occupation than that of preparing the way for their marriage: he had done all: he had answered for Mess Lethierry, seen the Dean, obtained the

license, signed the necessary declaration, and thus the marriage had been rendered possible. But Déruchette understood it not. If she had, she could not have comprehended the reasons. They did nothing but close their eyes to the world, and—grateful in their hearts—yield themselves up to the guidance of this good demon. There was no time for explanations, and expressions of gratitude seemed too insignificant. They were silent in their trance of love.

The little power of thought which they retained was scarcely more than sufficient to guide them on their way—to enable them to distinguish the sea from the land, and the "Cashmere" from every other vessel.

In a few minutes they were at the little creek.

Caudray entered the boat first. At the moment when Déruchette was about to follow, she felt her sleeve held gently. It was Gilliatt, who had placed his finger upon a fold of her dress.

"Madam," he said, "you are going on a journey unexpectedly. It has struck me that you would have need of dresses and clothes. You will find a trunk aboard the "Cashmere," containing a lady's clothing. It came to me from my mother. It was intended for my wife if I should marry. Permit me to ask your acceptance of it."

Déruchette, partially aroused from her dream, turned towards him. Gilliatt continued, in a voice which was scarcely audible,

"I do not wish to detain you, madam, but I feel that I ought to give you some explanation. On the day of your misfortune you were sitting in the lower room; you uttered certain words; it is easy to understand that you have forgotten them. We are not compelled to remember every word we speak. Mess Lethierry was in great sorrow. It was certainly a noble vessel, and one that did good service. The misfortune was recent; there was a great commotion. Those are things which one naturally forgets. It was only a vessel wrecked among the rocks; one cannot be always thinking of an accident. But what I wished to tell you was, that as it was said that no one would go, I went. They said it was impossible, but it was not. I thank you for listening to me a moment. You can understand, madam, that if I went there, it was not with the thought of displeasing you. This is a thing, besides, of old date. I know that you are in haste. If there was time, if we talked about this, you might perhaps remember. But this is all useless now. The history of it goes back to a day when there was snow upon the ground. And then, on one occasion that I passed you, I thought that you looked kindly on me. This is how it was. With regard to last night, I had not had time to go to my home. I came from my labour; I was all torn and ragged; I startled you, and you fainted. I was to blame; people do not come like that to strangers' houses; I ask your forgiveness. This is nearly all I had to say. You are about to sail. You will have fine weather; the wind is in the east. Farewell! You will not blame me for



troubling you with these things. This is the last minute."

"I am thinking of the trunk you spoke of," replied Déruchette. "Why do you not keep it for your wife, when you marry?"

"It is most likely, madam," replied Gilliatt, "that I shall never marry."

"That would be a pity," said Déruchette; "you are so good."

And Déruchette smiled. Gilliatt returned her smile.

Then he assisted her to step into the boat.

In less than a quarter of an hour afterwards, Caudray and Déruchette were aboard the "Cashmere," in the roads.

## V.

### THE GREAT TOMB.

GILLIATT walked along the water-side, passed rapidly through St. Peter's Port, and then turned towards St. Sampson by the sea-shore. In his anxiety to meet no one whom he knew, he avoided the highways, now filled with foot-passengers by his great achievement.

For a long time, as the reader knows, he had had a peculiar manner of traversing the country in all parts without being observed. He knew the by-paths, and favoured solitary and winding routes; he had the shy habits of a wild beast who knows that he is disliked, and keeps at a distance. When quite a child, he had been quick to feel how little welcome men showed in their faces at his approach, and he had gradually contracted that habit of being alone which had since become an instinct.

He passed through the Esplanade, then by the Salerie. Now and then he turned and looked behind him at the "Cashmere" in the roads which was beginning to set her sails. There was little wind; Gilliatt went faster than the "Cashmere." He walked with downcast eyes among the lower rocks at the water's edge. The tide was beginning to rise.

Suddenly he stopped, and, turning his back, contemplated for some minutes a group of oaks beyond the rocks which concealed the road to Vale. They were the oaks at the spot called the Basses Maisons. It was there that Déruchette once wrote with her finger the name of Gilliatt in the snow. Many a day had passed since that snow had melted away.

Then he pursued his way.

The day was beautiful—more beautiful than any that had yet been seen that year. It was one of those spring days when May suddenly pours forth all its beauty, and when Nature seems to have no thought but to rejoice and be happy. Amidst the many murmurs from forest and village, from the sea and the air, a sound of cooing could be distinguished. The first butterflies of the year were resting on the early roses. Everything in nature seemed new—the grass, the mosses, the leaves, the perfumes,

the rays of light. The sun shone as if it had never shone before. The pebbles seemed bathed in coolness. Birds but lately fledged sang out their deep notes from the trees, or fluttered among the boughs in their attempts to use their new-found wings. There was a chattering all together of goldfinches, pewits, tomtits, woodpeckers, bullfinches, and thrushes. The blossoms of lilacs, May lilies, daphnes, and melilots mingled their various hues in the thickets. A beautiful kind of water-weed peculiar to Guernsey covered the pools with an emerald green; and the kingfishers and the water-wagtails, which make such graceful little nests, came down there to bathe their wings. Through every opening in the branches appeared the deep blue sky. A few lazy clouds followed each other in the azure depths. The ear seemed to catch the sound of kisses sent from invisible lips. Every old wall had its tufts of wallflowers. The plum-trees and laburnums were in blossom; their white and yellow masses gleamed through the interlacing boughs. The spring showered all her gold and silver on the woods. The new shoots and leaves were green and fresh. Calls of welcome were in the air; the approaching summer opened her hospitable doors for birds coming from afar. It was the time of the arrival of the swallows. The clusters of furze-bushes bordered the steep sides of hollow roads in anticipation of the clusters of the hawthorn. The pretty and the beautiful reigned side by side; the magnificent and the graceful, the great and the little, had each their place. No note in the great concert of nature was lost. Green microscopic beauties took their place in the vast universal plan in which all seemed distinguishable as in limpid water. Everywhere a divine fullness, a mysterious sense of expansion, suggested the unseen effort of the sap in movement. Glittering things glittered more than ever; loving natures became more tender. There was a hymn in the flowers, and a radiance in the sounds of the air. The wide-diffused harmony of nature burst forth on every side. All things which felt the dawn of life invited others to put forth shoots. A movement coming from below, and also from above, stirred vaguely all hearts susceptible to the scattered and subterranean influence of germination. The flower shadowed forth the fruit; young maidens dreamed of love. It was Nature's universal bridal. It was fine, bright, and warm; through the hedges in the meadows children were seen laughing and playing at their games. The fruit-trees filled the orchards with their heaps of white and pink blossoms. In the fields were primroses, cowslips, milfoil, daffodils, daisies, speedwell, jacinths, and violets. Blue borage and yellow irises swarmed with those beautiful little pink stars which flower always in groups, and are hence called "companions." Creatures with golden scales glided between the stones. The flowering houseleek covered the thatched roofs with purple patches. Women were plaiting hives in the open air; and the

bees were abroad, mingling their humming with the murmurs from the sea.

When Gilliatt arrived at St. Sampson, the water had not yet risen at the further end of the harbour, and he was able to cross it dry-footed unperceived behind the hulks of vessels fixed for repair. A number of flat stones were placed there at regular distances to make a causeway.

He was not observed. The crowd was at the other end of the port, near the narrow entrance, by the Bravées. There his name was in every mouth. They were speaking about him so much that none paid attention to him. He passed, sheltered in some degree by the very commotion that he had caused.

He saw from afar the sloop in the place where he had moored it, with the funnel standing between its four chains; observed a movement of carpenters at their work, and confused outlines of figures passing to and fro; and he could distinguish the loud and cheery voice of Mess Lethierry giving orders.

He threaded the narrow alleys behind the Bravées. There was no one there beside him. All curiosity was concentrated on the front of the house. He chose the footpath alongside the low wall of the garden, but stopped at the angle where the wild mallow grew. He saw once more the stone where he used to pass his time; saw once more the wooden garden-seat where Déruchette was accustomed to sit, and glanced again at the pathway of the alley where he had seen the embrace of two shadows which had vanished.

He soon went on his way, climbed the hill of Vale Castle, descended again, and directed his steps towards the Bû de la Rue.

The Houmet-Paradis was a solitude.

His house was in the same state in which he had left it in the morning, after dressing himself to go to St. Peter's Port.

A window was open, through which his bagpipe might have been seen hanging to a nail upon the wall.

Upon the table was the little "Bible" given to him in token of gratitude by the stranger whom he now knew as Caudray.

The key was in the door. He approached, placed his hand upon it, turned it twice in the lock, put the key in his pocket, and departed.

He walked not in the direction of the town, but towards the sea.

He traversed his garden diagonally, taking the shortest way without regard to the beds, but taking care not to tread upon the plants which he placed there, because he had heard that they were favourites with Déruchette.

He crossed the parapet wall, and let himself down upon the rocks.

Going straight on, he began to follow the long ridge of rocks which connected the Bû de la Rue with the great natural obelisk of granite rising erect from the sea, which was known as the Beast's Horn. This was the place of the Gild-Holm-'Ur seat.

He strode on from block to block like a giant among mountains. To make long strides upon a row of breakers is like walking upon the ridge of a roof.

A fisherwoman with dredge-nets, who had been walking naked-footed among the pools of sea-water at some distance, and had just regained the shore, called to him, "Take care; the tide is coming." But he held on his way.

Having arrived at the great rock of the point, the Horn, which rises like a pinnacle from the sea, he stopped. It was the extremity of the promontory.

He looked around.

Out at sea a few sailing-boats at anchor were fishing. Now and then rivulets of silver glittered among them in the sun; it was the water running from the nets. The "Cashmere" was not yet off St. Sampson. She had set her maintopsail, and was between Herm and Jethou.

Gilliatt rounded the rock, and came under the Gild-Holm-'Ur seat, at the foot of that kind of abrupt stairs where, less than three months before, he had assisted Caudray to come down. He ascended.

The greater number of the steps were already under water. Two or three only were still dry, by which he climbed.

The steps led up to the Gild-Holm-'Ur seat. He reached the niche, contemplated it for a moment, pressed his hand upon his eyes, and let it glide gently from one eyelid to the other—a gesture by which he seemed to obliterate the memory of the past—then sat down in the hollow, with the perpendicular wall behind him, and the ocean at his feet.

The "Cashmere" at that moment was passing the great round half-submerged tower, defended by one sergeant and a cannon, which marks the half way in the roads between Herm and St. Peter's Port.

A few flowers stirred among the crevices in the rock about Gilliatt's head. The sea was blue as far as eye could reach. The wind came from the east; there was a little surf in the direction of the island of Sark, of which only the western side is visible from Guernsey. In the distance appeared the coast of France like a mist, with the long yellow strips of sand about Carteret. Now and then a white butterfly fluttered by. The butterflies frequently fly out to sea.

The breeze was very slight. The blue expanse, both above and below, was tranquil. Not a ripple agitated those species of serpents, of an azure more or less dark, which indicate on the surface of the sea the lines of sunken rocks.

The "Cashmere," little moved by the wind, had set her topsail and studding-sails to catch the breeze. All her canvas was spread, but the wind being a side one, her studding-sails only compelled her to hug the Guernsey coast more closely. She had passed the beacon of St. Sampson, and was off the hill of Vale Castle. The moment was approaching when she would double the point of the Bû de la Rue.



Gilliatt watched her approach.

The air and sea were still. The tide rose not by waves, but by an imperceptible swell. The level of the water crept upward without a palpitation. The subdued murmur from the open sea was soft as the breathing of a child.

In the direction of the harbour of St. Sampson, faint echoes could be heard of carpenters' hammers. The carpenters were probably the workmen constructing the tackle, gear, and apparatus for removing the engine from the sloop. The sounds, however, scarcely reached Gilliatt by reason of the mass of granite at his back.

The "Cashmere" approached with the slowness of a phantom.

Gilliatt watched it still.

Suddenly a splash and a sensation of cold caused him to look down. The sea touched his feet.

He lowered his eyes, then raised them again.

The "Cashmere" was quite near.

The rock in which the rains had hollowed out the Gild-Holm-'Ur seat was so completely vertical, and there was so much water at its base, that in calm weather vessels were able to pass without danger within a few cables lengths.

The "Cashmere" was abreast of the rock. It rose straight upwards as if it had grown out of the water. It was like the lengthening out of a shadow. The rigging showed black against the heavens and in the magnificent expanse of the sea. The long sails, passing for a moment over the sun, became lighted up with a singular glory and transparence. The water murmured indistinctly, but no other noise marked the majestic gliding of that outline. The deck was as visible as if he had stood upon it.

The steersman was at the helm; a cabin-boy was climbing the shrouds; a few passengers leaning on the bulwarks were contemplating the beauty of the scene. The captain was smoking; but nothing of all this was seen by Gilliatt.

There was a spot on the deck on which the broad sunlight fell. It was on this corner that his eyes were fixed. In this sunlight stood Déruchette and Caudray. They were sitting together side by side, like two birds, warming themselves in the noonday sun, upon one of those covered seats with a little awning which well-ordered packet-boats provided for passengers, and upon which was the inscription, when it happened to be an English vessel, "For ladies only." Déruchette's head was leaning upon Caudray's shoulder; his arm was around her waist; they held each other's hands with their fingers interwoven. A celestial light was discernible in those two faces formed by innocence. Their chaste embrace was expressive of their earthly union and their purity of soul. The seat was a sort of alcove, almost a nest; it was at the same time a glory round them—the tender aureola of love passing into a cloud.

The silence was like the calm of heaven.

Caudray's gaze was fixed in contemplation. Déruchette's lips moved; and, amidst that perfect silence, as the wind carried the vessel near

shore, and it glided within a few fathoms of the Gild-Holm-'Ur seat, Gilliatt heard the tender and musical voice of Déruchette exclaiming,

"Look yonder. It seems as if there were a man upon the rock."

The vessel passed.

Leaving the promontory of the Bâ de la Rue behind, the "Cashmere" glided on upon the waters. In less than a quarter of an hour, her masts and sails formed only a white obelisk, gradually decreasing against the horizon. Gilliatt felt that the water had reached his knees.

He contemplated the vessel speeding on her way.

The breeze freshened out at sea. He could see the "Cashmere" run out her lower studding-sails and her staysails to take advantage of the rising wind. She was already clear of the waters of Guernsey. Gilliatt followed it with his eyes.

The waves had reached his waist.

The tide was rising: time was passing away.

The sea-mews and cormorants flew about him restlessly, as if anxious to warn him of his danger. It seemed as if some of his old companions of the Douvres rocks had recognised him.

An hour had passed.

The wind from the sea was scarcely felt in the roads, but the form of the "Cashmere" was rapidly growing less. The sloop, according to all appearance, was sailing fast. It was already nearly off the Casquets.

There was no foam around the Gild-Holm-'Ur; no wave beat against its granite sides. The water rose peacefully. It was nearly level with Gilliatt's shoulders.

Another hour had passed.

The "Cashmere" was beyond the waters of Aurigny. The Ortach rock concealed it for a moment; it passed behind it, and came forth again as from an eclipse. The sloop was veering to the north upon the open sea. It was now only a point glittering in the sun.

The birds were hovering about Gilliatt, uttering short cries. Only his head was now visible. The tide was nearly at the full. Evening was approaching. Behind him, in the roads, a few fishing-boats were making for the harbour.

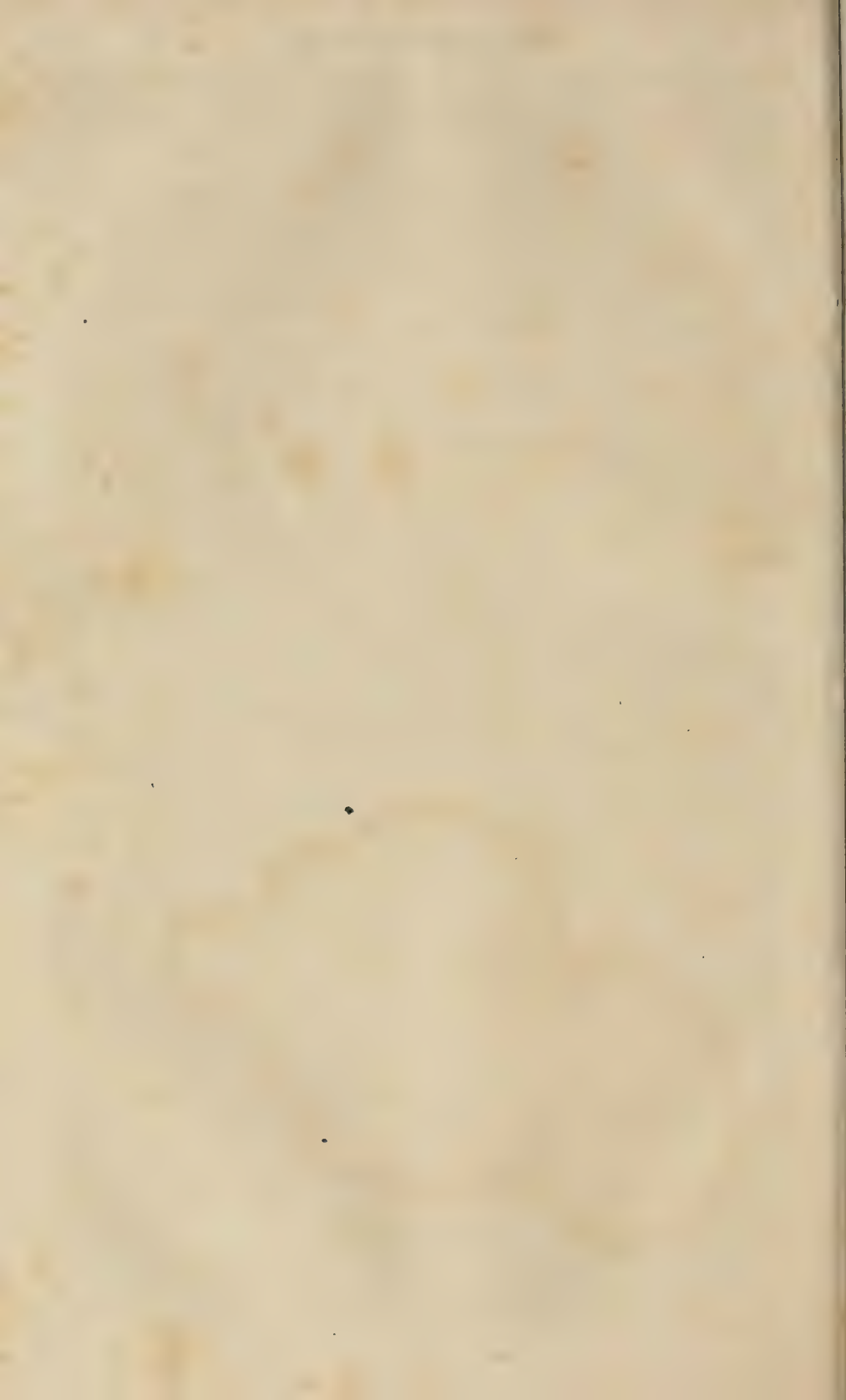
Gilliatt's eyes continued fixed upon the vessel in the horizon. Their expression resembled nothing earthly. A strange lustre shone in their calm and tragic depths. There was in them the peace of vanished hopes, the calm but sorrowful acceptance of an end far different from his dreams. By degrees the dusk of heaven began to darken in them, though gazing still upon the point in space. At the same moment the wide waters round the Gild-Holm-'Ur and the vast gathering twilight closed upon them.

The "Cashmere," now scarcely perceptible, had become a mere spot in the thin haze.

Gradually the spot, which was but a shape, grew paler.

Then it dwindled, and finally disappeared.

At the moment when the vessel vanished on the line of the horizon, the head of Gilliatt disappeared. Nothing was visible now but the sea.





THE FORTUNES  
OF  
GLENCORE.

BY CHARLES LEVER,

AUTHOR OF

"THE MARTINS OF CRO' MARTIN," "THE DALTONS," "THE DODD FAMILY ABROAD,"  
"SIR JASPER CAREW," "ROLAND CASHEL," "MAURICE TIERNAY," &c.

NEW YORK:  
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1857.





TO

SIR JAMES HUDSON, K.C.B.,

H.B.M.'S MINISTER AT TURIN.

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MY DEAR HUDSON,

IF there be any thing good in these volumes, I know of no one more capable than yourself to detect and appreciate it. If they be all valueless, who is there so ready to pardon faults and overlook short-comings? With a tolerably wide acquaintance, I do not know of your superior in either quality; and in this assurance I dedicate them to you, very proud as I am to write your name on the same page with that of

Yours faithfully,

CHARLES LEVER.





## NOTICE.

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I AM unwilling to suffer this tale to leave my hands without a word of explanation to my reader. If I have never disguised from myself the grounds of any humble success I have attained to as a writer of fiction—if I have always had before me the fact that to movement and action, the stir of incident, and a certain light-heartedness and gayety of temperament, more easy to impart to others than to repress in one's self, I have owed much, if not all, of whatever popularity I have enjoyed, I have yet felt, or fancied that I felt, that it would be in the delineation of very different scenes, and the portraiture of very different emotions, that I should reap what I would reckon as a real success. This conviction, or impression if you will, has become stronger with years and with the knowledge of life; years have imparted, and time has but confirmed me in the notion, that any skill I possess lies in the detection of character, and the unravelment of that tangled skein which makes up human motives.

I am well aware that no error is more common than to mistake one's own powers; nor does any thing more contribute to this error than a sense of self-depreciation for what the world has been pleased to deem successful in us. To test my conviction, or to abandon it as a delusion forever, I have written the present story of "Glencore."

I make little pretension to the claim of interesting—as little do I aspire to the higher credit of instructing. All I have attempted—all I have striven to accomplish—is the faithful portraiture of character, the close analysis of motives, and correct observation as to some of the manners and modes of thought which mark the age we live in.

Opportunities of society, as well as natural inclination, have alike disposed me to such studies. I have stood over the game of life very patiently for many a year, and though I may have grieved over the narrow fortune which has prevented me from "cutting in," I have consoled myself by the thought of all the anxieties defeat might have cost me, all the chagrin I had suffered were I to have risen a loser. Besides this, I have learned to know and estimate what are the qualities which win success in life, and what the gifts by which men dominate above their fellows.

If in the world of well-bred life the incidents and events be fewer, because the friction is less than in the classes where vicissitudes of fortune are more frequent, the play of passion, the moods of temper, and the changeful vari-

eties of nature, are often very strongly developed, shadowed and screened though they be by the polished conventionalities of society. To trace and mark these has long constituted one of the pleasures of my life; if I have been able to impart even a portion of that gratification to my reader, I will not deem the effort in vain, nor the "Fortunes of Glencore" a failure.

Let me add, that although certain traits of character in some of the individuals of my story may seem to indicate sketches of real personages, there is but one character in the whole book drawn entirely from life. This is Billy Traynor. Not only have I had a sitter for this picture, but he is alive and hearty at the hour I am writing. For the others, they are purely, entirely fictitious. Certain details, certain characteristics, I have of course borrowed, as he who would mould a human face must needs have copied an eye, a nose, or a chin from some existent model; but beyond this I have not gone, nor, indeed, have I found, in all my experience of life, that fiction ever suggests what has not been implanted, unconsciously, by memory; originality in the delineation of character being little beyond a new combination of old materials derived from that source.

I wish I could as easily apologize for the faults and blemishes of my story as I can detect and deplore them; but, like the failings in one's nature, they are very often difficult to correct even when acknowledged. I have, therefore, but to throw myself once more upon the indulgence which, "old offender" that I am, has never forsaken me, and subscribe myself

Your devoted friend and servant,

C. L.



# THE FORTUNES OF GLENCORE.

## CHAPTER I.

### A LONELY LANDSCAPE.

WHERE that singularly beautiful inlet of the sea, known in the west of Ireland as the Killeries, after narrowing to a mere strait, expands into a bay, stands the ruin of the ancient Castle of Glencore. With the bold steep sides of Ben Greggán behind, and the broad blue Atlantic in front, the proud keep would seem to have occupied a spot that might have bid defiance to the boldest assailant. The estuary itself here seems entirely landlocked, and resembles in the wild fantastic outline of the mountains around, a Norwegian fiord, rather than a scene in our own tamer landscape. The small village of Leenane, which stands on the Galway shore, opposite to Glencore, presents the only trace of habitation in this wild and desolate district, for the country around is poor, and its soil offers little to repay the task of the husbandman. Fishing is then the chief, if not the sole resource of those who pass their lives in this solitary region; and thus, in every little creek or inlet of the shore may be seen the stout craft of some hardy venturer, and nets, and tackle, and such like gear, lie drying on every rocky eminence.

We have said that Glencore was a ruin, but still its vast proportions, yet traceable in massive fragments of masonry, displayed specimens of various eras of architecture, from the rudest tower of the twelfth century to the more ornate style of a later period; while artificial embankments and sloped sides of grass showed the remains of what once had been terrace and "parterre," the successors it might be presumed, of fosse and parapet.

Many a tale of cruelty and oppression, many a story of suffering and sorrow clung to these old walls, for they had formed the home of a haughty and a cruel race, the last descendant of which died in the close of the past century. The Castle of Glencore, with the title, had now descended to a distant relation of the house, who had repaired and so far restored the old residence as to make it habitable—that is to say, four bleak and lofty chambers were rudely furnished, and about as many smaller ones fitted for servant accommodation, but no effort at embellishment, not even the commonest attempt at neatness was bestowed on the grounds or the garden; and in this state it remained for some five and twenty or thirty years, when the tidings reached the little village of Leenane that his lordship was about to return to Glencore, and fix his residence there.

Such an event was of no small moment in such a locality, and many were the specula-

tions as to what might be the consequence of his coming. Little, or indeed nothing, was known of Lord Glencore; his only visit to the neighborhood had occurred many years before, and lasted but for a day. He had arrived suddenly, and, taking a boat at the ferry—as it was called—crossed over to the castle, whence he returned at nightfall, to depart as hurriedly as he came.

Of those who had seen him in this brief visit the accounts were vague and most contradictory. Some called him handsome and well built; others said he was a dark-looking, downcast man, with a sickly and forbidding aspect. None, however, could record one single word he had spoken, nor could ever gossips pretend to say that he gave utterance to any opinion about the place or the people. The mode in which the estate was managed gave as little insight into the character of the proprietor. If no severity was displayed to the few tenants on the property, there was no encouragement given to their efforts at improvement; a kind of cold neglect was the only feature discernible, and many went so far as to say, that if any cared to forget the payment of his rent the chances were it might never be demanded of him; the great security against such a venture, however, lay in the fact, that the land was held at a mere nominal rental, and few would have risked his tenure by such an experiment.

It was little to be wondered at that Lord Glencore was not better known in that secluded spot, since even in England his name was scarcely heard of. His fortune was very limited, and he had no political influence whatever, not possessing a seat in the upper house; so that, as he spent his life abroad, he was almost totally forgotten in his own country.

All that Debrett could tell of him was comprised in a few lines, recording simply that he was sixth Viscount Glencore and Loughdooner; born in the month of February, 1802, and married in August, 1824, to Clarissa Isabella, second daughter of Sir Guy Clifford, of Wytchley, Baronet; by whom he had issue, Charles Conyngham Massey, born 6th June, 1828. There closed the notice.

Strange and quaint things are these short biographies, with little beyond the barren fact that "he had lived" and "he had died;" and yet with all the changes of this work-a-day world, with its din and turmoil, and gold-seeking, and "progress," men cannot divest themselves of reverence for birth and blood, and the veneration for high descent remains an in-

distinct of humanity. Sneer, as men will, at "heaven-born legislators," laugh as you may at the "tenth transmitter of a foolish face," there is something eminently impressive in the fact of a position acquired by deeds that date back to centuries, and preserved inviolate to the successor of him who fought at Agincourt or at Cressy. If ever this religion shall be impaired, the fault be on those who have derogated from their great prerogative, and forgotten to make illustrious by example what they have inherited illustrious by descent.

When the news first reached the neighborhood that a lord was about to take up his residence in the castle, the most extravagant expectations were conceived of the benefits to arise from such a source. The very humblest already speculated on the advantages his wealth was to diffuse, and the thousand little channels into which his affluence would be directed. The ancient traditions of the place spoke of a time of boundless profusion, when troops of mounted followers used to accompany the old barons, and when the lough itself used to be covered with boats, with the armorial bearings of Glencore floating proudly from their mastheads. There were old men then living who remembered as many as two hundred laborers being daily employed on the grounds and gardens of the castle; and the most fabulous stories were told of fortunes accumulated by those who were lucky enough to have saved the rich earrings of that golden period.

Colored as such speculations were with all the imaginative warmth of the west, it was a terrible shock to such sanguine fancies, when they beheld a middle-aged, sad-looking man arrive in a simple post-chaise, accompanied by his son, a child of six or seven years of age, and a single servant—a grim-looking old dragoon corporal, who neither invited intimacy nor rewarded it. It was not, indeed, for a long time that they could believe that this was "my lord," and that this solitary attendant was the whole of that great retinue they had so long been expecting; nor, indeed, could any evidence less strong than Mrs. Mulcahy's, of the Post-office, completely satisfy them on the subject. The address of certain letters and newspapers to the Lord Viscount Glencore was, however, a testimony beyond dispute; so that nothing remained but to revenge themselves on the unconscious author of their self-deception for the disappointment he gave them. This, it is true, required some ingenuity, for they scarcely ever saw him, nor could they ascertain a single fact of his habits or mode of life.

He never crossed the lough, as the inlet of the sea, about three miles in width, was called. He as rigidly excluded the peasantry from the grounds of the Castle; and, save an old fisher-

man, who carried his letter-bag to and fro, and a few laborers in the spring and autumn, none ever invaded the forbidden precincts.

Of course, such privacy paid its accustomed penalty; and many an explanation, of a kind little flattering, was circulated to account for so ungenial an existence. Some alleged that he had committed some heavy crime against the State, and was permitted to pass his life there, on the condition of perpetual imprisonment; others, that his wife had deserted him, and that in his forlorn condition he had sought out a spot to live and die in, unnoticed and unknown; a few ascribed his solitude to debt; while others were divided in opinion between charges of misanthropy and avarice—to either of which accusations his lonely and simple life fully exposed him.

In time, however, people grew tired of repeating stories to which no new evidence added any features of interest. They lost the zest for a scandal which ceased to astonish, and "my lord" was as much forgotten, and his existence as unspoken of, as though the old towers had once again become the home of the owl and the jackdaw.

It was now about eight years since "the lord" had taken up his abode at the Castle, when one evening, a raw and gusty night of December, the little skiff of the fisherman was seen standing in for shore—a sight somewhat uncommon, since she always crossed the lough in time for the morning's mail.

"There's another man aboard, too," said a by-stander from the little group that watched the boat, as she neared the harbor; "I think it's Mr. Craggs."

"You're right enough, Sam—it's the corporal; I know his cap, and the short tail of hair he wears under it. What can bring him at this time o' night?"

"He's going to bespeak a quarter of Tim Healey's beef, may be," said one, with a grin of malicious drollery.

"Mayhap it's askin' us all to spend the Christmas he'd be," said another.

"Whisht! or he'll hear you," muttered a third; and at the same instant the sail came clattering down, and the boat glided swiftly past, and entered a little natural creek close beneath where they stood.

"Who has got a horse and a jaunting-car?" cried the Corporal, as he jumped on shore.

"I want one for Clifden directly."

"It's fifteen miles—divil a less," cried one.

"Fifteen! no, but eighteen! Kiely's bridge is bruck down, and you'll have to go by Gortnamuck."

"Well, and if he has, can't he take the cut?"

"He can't."

"Why not? Didn't I go that way last week?"



"Well, and if you did, didn't you lame your baste?"

"'Twasn't the cut did it."

"It was—sure I know better—Billy Moore tould me."

"Billy's a liar!"

Such and such like comments and contradictions were very rapidly exchanged, and already the debate was waxing warm, when Mr. Craggs's authoritative voice interposed with—

"Billy Moore be blowed! I want to know if I can have a car and horse?"

"To be sure! why not?—who says you can't?" chimed in a chorus.

"If you go to Clifden under five hours, my name isn't Terry Lynch," said an old man in rabbitskin breeches.

"I'll engage, if Barney will give me the blind mare, to drive him there under four."

"Bother!" said the rabbitskin, in a tone of contempt.

"But where's the horse?" cried the corporal.

"Ay, that's it," said another, "where's the horse?"

"Is there none to be found in the village?" asked Craggs, eagerly.

"Divil a horse barrin' an ass. Barney's mare has the staggers the last fortnight, and Mrs. Kyle's pony broke his two knees on Tuesday, carrying sea-weed up the rocks."

"But I must go to Clifden; I must be there to-night," said Craggs.

"It's on foot, then, you'll have to do it," said the rabbitskin.

"Lord Glencore's dangerously ill, and needs a doctor," said the Corporal, bursting out with a piece of most uncommon communicativeness. "Is there none of you will give his horse for such an errand?"

"Arrah, musha!—it's a pity!" and such-like expressions of passionate import, were muttered on all sides; but no more active movement seemed to flow from the condolence, while in a lower tone were added such expressions as, "Sorra mend him—if he wasn't a naygar, wouldn't he have a horse of his own? It's a droll lord he is, to be begging the loan of a baste!"

Something like a malediction arose to the Corporal's lips; but restraining it, and with a voice thick from passion, he said—

"I'm ready to pay you—to pay you ten times over the worth of your—"

"You needn't curse the horse, anyhow," interposed Rabbitskin, while, with a significant glance at his friends around him, he slyly intimated that it would be as well to adjourn the debate—a motion as quickly obeyed as it was mooted; for in less than five minutes Craggs was standing beside the quay, with no other companion than a blind beggarwoman, who, perfectly regardless of his distress, con-

tinued energetically to draw attention to her own.

"A little fippenny bit, my lord—the laste trifle your honor's glory has in the corner of your pocket, that you'll never miss, but that'll sweeten ould Molly's tay to-night? There, acushla, have pity on the dark, and that you may see glory."

But Craggs did not wait for the remainder, but, deep in his own thoughts, sauntered down towards the village. Already had the others retreated within their homes; and now all was dark and cheerless along the little straggling street.

"And this is a Christian country!—this a land that people tell you abounds in kindness and good nature!" said he, in an accent of sarcastic bitterness.

"And who'll say the reverse?" answered a voice from behind; and turning he beheld the little hunch-backed fellow who carried the mail on foot from Oughterard, a distance of sixteen miles, over a mountain, and who was popularly known as "Billy the Bag," from the little leather sack, which seemed to form part of his attire. "Who'll stand up and tell me it's not a fine country in every sinse—for natural beauties, for antiquities, for elegant men and lovely females, for quarries of marble and mines of gould?"

Craggs looked contemptuously at the figure who thus declaimed of Ireland's wealth and grandeur, and, in a sneering tone, said—

"And with such riches on every side, why do you go bare-foot—why are you in rags, my old fellow?"

"Isn't there poor everywhere? If the world was all gould and silver, what would be the precious metals—tell me that? Is it because there's a little cripple like myself here, that them mountains yonder isn't of copper, and iron, and cobalt? Come over with me after I lave the bags at the office, and I'll show you bits of every one I speak of."

"I'd rather you'd show me a doctor, my worthy fellow," said Craggs, sighing.

"I'm the nearest thing to that same going," replied Billy. "I can breathe a vein against any man in the barony. I can't say, that for an articular congestion of the aortic valves, or for a sero-pulmonic diathesis—d'ye mind?—that there isn't as good as me; but for the ould school of physic, the humoral diagnostic, who can beat me?"

"Will you come with me across the lough, and see my lord, then?" said Craggs, who was glad even of such aid in his emergency.

"And why not, when I lave the bags?" said Billy, touching the leather sack as he spoke.

If the Corporal was not without his misgivings as to the skill and competence of his companion, there was something in the fluent vol-

ubility of the little fellow that overawed and impressed him, while his words were uttered in a rich mellow voice, that gave them a sort of solemn persuasiveness.

"Were you always on the road?" asked the Corporal, curious to learn some particulars of his history.

"No sir; I was twenty things before I took to the bags. I was a poor scholar for four years; I kept school in Erris; I was 'on' the ferry in Dublin with my fiddle for eighteen months; and I was a bear in Liverpool for part of a winter."

"A bear!" exclaimed Craggs.

"Yes, sir. It was an Italian—one Pipo Chiassi by name—that lost his beast at Manchester, and persuaded me, as I was about the same stature, to don the sable, and perform in his place. After that I took to writin' for the papers—the *Skibbereen Cult*—and supported myself very well till it broke. But here we are at the office, so I'll step in, and get my fiddle, too, if you've no objection."

The Corporal's meditations scarcely were of a kind to reassure him, as he thought over the versatile character of his new friend; but the case offered no alternative—it was Billy or nothing—since to reach Clifden on foot would be the labor of many hours, and in the interval his master should be left utterly alone. While he was thus musing, Billy reappeared, with a violin under one arm, and a much-worn quarto under the other.

"This," said he, touching the volume, is the 'Whole Art and Mystery of Physic,' by one Falreecin, of Aquapendante; and if we don't find a cure for the case down here, take my word for it, it's among the *morba ignota*, as Paracelsus says."

"Well, come along," said Craggs impatiently; and set off at a speed that, notwithstanding Billy's habits of foot-travel, kept him at a sharp trot. A few minutes more saw them, with canvas spread, skimming across the lough, towards Glencore.

"Glencore—Glencore!" muttered Billy once or twice to himself, as the swift boat bounded through the hissing surf. "Did you ever hear Lady Lucy's Lament?" And he struck a few chords with his fingers as he spoke—

"I care not for yon trellised vine;  
I love the dark woods on the shore,  
Nor all the towers along the Rhine  
Are dear to me as old Glencore.  
The rugged cliff, Ben-Creggan high,  
Re-echoing the Atlantic roar,  
And mingling with the seagull's cry  
My welcome back to old Glencore.

"And then there's a chorus."

"That's a signal to us to make haste," said the Corporal, pointing to a bright flame which

suddenly shot up on the shore of the lough "Put out an oar to leeward there, and keep her up to the wind."

And Billy, perceiving his minstrelsy unattended to, consoled himself by humming over, for his own amusement, the remainder of his ballad.

The wind freshened as the night grew darker, and heavy seas repeatedly broke on the bow, and swept over the boat in sprayey showers.

"It's that confounded song of yours has got the wind up," said Craggs, angrily; "stand by that sheet, and stop your croning!"

"That's an *error vulgaris*, attributin' to music marine disasters," said Billy calmly; "it arose out of a mistake about one Orpheus."

"Slack off there!" cried Craggs, as a squall struck the boat, and laid her almost over.

Billy, however, had obeyed the mandate promptly, and she soon righted, and held on her course.

"I wish they'd show the light again on shore," muttered the Corporal: "the night is as black as pitch."

"Keep the top of the mountain a little to windward, and you're all right," said Billy. "I know the lough well; I used to come here all hours, day and night, once, spearing salmon."

"And smuggling, too!" added Craggs.

"Yes, sir; brandy, and tay, and pigtail, for Mr. Sheares, in Oughterard."

"What became of him?" asked Craggs.

"He made a fortune and died, and his son married a lady!"

"Here comes another; throw her head up in the wind," cried Craggs.

This time the order came too late; for the squall struck her with the suddenness of a shot, and she canted over till her keel lay out of water, and, when she righted, it was with the white surf boiling over her.

"She's a good boat, then, to stand that," said Billy, as he struck a light for his pipe, with all the coolness of one perfectly at his ease; and Craggs, from that very moment conceived a favorable opinion of the little hunchback.

"Now we're in the smooth water, Corporal," cried Billy; "let her go a little free."

And, obedient to the advice, he ran the boat swiftly along till she entered a small creek, so sheltered by the highlands that the water within was still as a mountain lake.

"You never made the passage on a worse night, I'll be bound," said Craggs, as he sprang on shore.

"Indeed and I did, then," replied Billy. "I remember it was two days before Christmas we were blown out to say in a small boat, not



more than the half of this, and we only made the west side of Arran Island after thirty-six hours' beating and tacking. I wrote an account of it for *The Tyranny Regenerator*, commencing with—

"The elemental conflict that with tremendous violence raged, ravaged, and ruined the adamantine foundations of our western coast, on Tuesday, the 23d of December——"

"Come along, come along," said Craggs; "we've something else to think of."

And with this admonition, very curtly bestowed, he stepped out briskly on the path towards Glencore.

## CHAPTER II.

## GLENCORE CASTLE.

WHEN the Corporal, followed by Billy, entered the gloomy hall of the castle, they found two or three country people conversing in a low but eager voice together, who speedily turned towards them, to learn if the doctor had come.

"Here's all I could get in the way of a doctor," said Craggs, pushing Billy towards them as he spoke.

"Faix, and ye might have got worse," muttered a very old man; "Billy Traynor has 'the lucky hand.'"

"How is my lord, now, Nelly?" asked the Corporal of a woman who, with bare feet, and dressed in the humblest fashion of the peasantry, now appeared.

"He's getting weaker and weaker, sir; I believe he's sinking. I'm glad it's Billy is come; I'd rather see him than all the doctors in the country."

"Follow me," said Craggs, giving a signal to step lightly. And he led the way up a narrow stone stair, with a wall on either hand.—Traversing a long, low corridor, they reached a door, at which having waited for a second or two to listen, Craggs turned the handle and entered. The room was very large and lofty, and, seen in the dim light of a small lamp upon the hearthstone, seemed even more spacious than it was. The oaken floor was uncarpeted, and a very few articles of furniture occupied the walls. In one corner stood a large bed, the heavy curtains of which had been gathered up on the roof, the better to admit air to the sick man.

As Billy drew nigh with cautious steps he perceived that, although worn and wasted by long illness, the patient was still a man in the very prime of life. His dark hair and beard, which he wore long, were untinged with gray, and his forehead showed no touch of age. His dark eyes were wide open, and his lips slightly parted, his whole features exhibiting an expression of energetic action, even to wildness.

Still he was sleeping; and, as Craggs whispered, he seldom slept otherwise, even when in health. With all the quietness of a trained practitioner, Billy took down the watch that was pinned to the curtain and proceeded to count the pulse.

"A hundred and thirty-eight," muttered he, as he finished; and then gently displacing the bedclothes, laid his hand upon the heart.

With a long-drawn sigh, like that of utter weariness, the sick man moved his head round and fixed his eyes upon him.

"The doctor!" said he, in a deep toned but feeble voice. "Leave me, Craggs—leave me alone with him."

And the Corporal slowly retired, turning as he went to look back towards the bed, and evidently going with reluctance.

"Is it fever?" asked the sick man, in a faint but unflinching accent.

"It's a kind of cerebral congestion—a matter of them membranes that's over the brain, with, of course, febrilis generalis."

The accentuation of these words, marked as it was by the strongest provincialism of the peasant, attracted the sick man's attention, and he bent upon him a look at once searching and severe.

"What are you—who are you?" cried he, angrily.

"What I am isn't so aisy to say; but who I am is clean beyond me."

"Are you a doctor?" asked the sick man, fiercely.

"I'm afeared I'm not, in the sense of a *gradum universalis*—a diploma; but sure may be Paracelsus himself just took to it, like me, having a vocation, as one might say."

"Ring that bell," said the other, preemptorily.

And Billy obeyed without speaking.

"What do you mean by this, Craggs?" said the Viscount, trembling with passion? "Who have you brought me? What beggar have you picked off the highway? Or is he the travelling fool of the district?"

But the anger that supplied strength hitherto now failed to impart energy, and he sank back wasted and exhausted. The Corporal bent over him, and spoke something in a low whisper, but whether the words were heard or not, the sick man now lay still, breathing heavily.

"Can you do nothing for him?" asked Craggs, peevishly—"Nothing but anger him?"

"To be sure I can, if you'll let me," said Billy, producing a very ancient lancet-case of box-wood tipped with ivory. "I'll just take a dash of blood from the temporal artery, to relieve the cerebrum, and then we'll put cowl on his head, and keep him quiet."

And with a promptitude that showed at least

self-confidence, he proceeded to accomplish the operation, every step of which he effected skilfully and well.

"There now," said he feeling the pulse, as the blood continued to flow freely. The circulation is relieved already; it's the same as opening a sluice in a mill-dam. He's better already."

"He looks easier," said Craggs.

"Ay, and he feels it," continued Billy.—"Just notice the respiratory organs, and see how easy the intercostals is doing their work now. Bring me a bowl of clean water, some vinegar, and any old rags you have."

Craggs obeyed, but not without a sneer at the direction.

"All over the head," said Billy; all over it—back and front—and with the blessing of the Virgin, I'll have the hair off of him if he isn't cooler towards evening."

So saying he covered the sick man with the wetted cloths, and bathed his hands in the cooling fluid.

"Now to exclude the light and save the brain from stimulation and excitation," said Billy, with a pompous enunciation of the last syllables; "and then *quies*—rest—peace!"

And with this direction, imparted with a caution to enforce its benefit, he moved stealthily towards the door and passed out.

"What do you think of him?" asked the Corporal, eagerly.

"He'll do—he'll do," said Billy. "He's a sanguineous temperament, and he'll bear the lancet. It's just like weatherin' a point at say. If you have a craft that will carry canvas, there's always a chance for you."

"He perceived that you were not a doctor," said Craggs, when they reached the corridor.

"Did he faix?" cried Billy, half indignant. "He might have perceived that I didn't come in a coach; that I hadn't my hair powdered, nor gold knee-buckles in my small-clothes; but, for all that, it would be going too far to say, that I wasn't a doctor. 'Tis the same with physic and poetry—you take to it, or you don't take to it! There's chaps, ay, and far from stupid ones either, that couldn't compose you ten hexameters, if ye'd put them on a hot griddle for it; and there's others that would talk rhyme rather than rayson! And so with the *ars medicatrix*—everybody hasn't an eye for a hectic, or an ear for a cough—*non contigit cuique adire Corinthum*. 'Tisn't every one can toss pancakes, as Horace says."

"Hush—be still!" muttered Craggs, "here's the young master;" and as he spoke, a youth of about fifteen, well-grown and handsome, but poorly, even meanly clad, approached them.

"Have you seen my father? What do you think of him?" asked he eagerly.

"'Tis a critical state he's in, your honor," said Billy, bowing; "but I think he'll come round—*deplation, deplation, deplation*—*actio, actio, actio*; relieve the gorged vessels, and don't drown the grand hydraulic machine, the heart—there's my sentiments."

Turning from the speaker, with a look of angry impatience, the boy whispered some words in the Corporal's ear.

"What could I do, sir?" was the answer; "it was this fellow or nothing."

"And better, a thousand times better, nothing," said the boy, "than trust his life to the coarse ignorance of this wretched quack."—And in his passion the words were uttered loud enough for Billy to overhear them.

"Don't be hasty, your honor," said Billy, submissively, "and don't be unjust. The realms of disaze is like an unknown tract of country or a country that's only known a little—just round the coast as it might be; once ye'r beyond that, one man is as good a guide as another, *cæteris paribus*, that is, with 'equal lights.'"

"What have you done? Have you given him anything?" broke in the boy hurriedly.

"I took a bleeding from him, a little short of sixteen ounces from the temporal," said Billy, proudly, and I'll give him now a concoction of meadow saffron with a pinch of saltpetre in it, to cause diaphoresis, dy'e mind? Meanwhile, we're disgorging the arachnoid membranes with cowd applications, and we're releeven the cerebellum by repose. I challenge the Hall," added Billy, stoutly, "to say isn't them the grand principles of 'traitment.' Ah! young gentleman," said he, after a few seconds' pause, "don't be hard on me, because I'm poor and in rags, nor think manely of me because I spake with a brogue, and may be bad grammar, for you see, even a crayture of my kind can have a knowledge of disaze, just as he may have a knowledge of nature, by observation. What is sickness, after all, but just one of the phenomenons of all organic and inorganic matter—a regular sort of shindy in a man's inside, like a thunderstorm, or a hurricane outside? Watch what's coming, look out and see which way the mischief is brewin', and make your preparations. That's the great study of physic."

The boy listened patiently and even attentively to this speech, and when Billy had concluded, he turned to the Corporal and said, "Look to him, Craggs, and let him have his supper, and when he has eaten it send him to my room."

Billy bowed an acknowledgment, and followed the Corporal to the kitchen.

"That's my lord's son, I suppose," said he, as he seated himself, "and a fine young crayture, too—*puer ingenuus*, with a grand frontal development; and with this reflection he ad-



dressed himself to the coarse but abundant fare which Craggs placed before him, and with an appetite that showed how much he relished it.

"This is elegant living ye have here, Mr. Craggs," said Billy, as he drained his tankard of beer, and placed it with a sigh on the table; "many happy years of it to ye—I couldn't wish ye anything better."

"The life is not so bad," said Craggs, "but it's lonely sometimes."

"Life need never be lonely so long as man has health and his faculties," said Billy; "give me nature to admire, a bit of baycon for dinner, and my fiddle to amuse me, and I wouldn't change with the king of Sugar Candy."

"I was there," said Craggs, "it's a fine island."

"My lord wants to see the doctor," said a woman entering hastily.

"And the doctor is ready for him," said Billy, rising and leaving the kitchen, with all the dignity he could assume.

## CHAPTER III.

BILLY TRAYNOR—POET, PEDDLER AND PHYSICIAN.

"DIDN'T I tell you how it would be?" said Billy, as he re-entered the kitchen, now crowded by the workpeople, anxious for tidings of the sick man. "The head is relieved, the con-justice symptoms is allayed, and when the artarial excitement subsides, he'll be out of danger."

"Musha but I'm glad," muttered one; "he'd be a great loss to us."

"True for you, Patsey; there's eight or nine of us here would miss him if he was gone."

"Troth he doesn't give much employment, but we couldn't spare him," croaked out a third, when the entrance of the Corporal cut short further commentary; and the party now gathered around the cheerful turf fire, with that instinctive sense of comfort impressed by the swooping wind and rain that beat against the windows.

"It's a dreadful night outside; I wouldn't like to cross the Lough in it," said one.

"Then that's just what I'm thinking of this minit," said Billy. "I'll have to be up at the office for the bags at six o'clock."

"Faix you'll not see Leenane at six o'clock to-morrow."

"Sorra taste of it," muttered another; "there's a sea runnin' outside now that would swamp a life-boat."

"I'll not lose an iligant situation of six pounds ten a-year, and a pair of shoes at Christmas for want of a bit of courage," said Billy; "I'd have my dismissal if I wasn't there, as sure as my name is Billy Traynor."

"And better for you than lose your life, Billy," said one.

"And it's not alone myself I'll be thinking of," said Billy; "but every man in this world, high and low, has his duties. *My duty*," added he, somewhat pretentiously, "is to carry the King's mail; and if anything was to obstruct, or impade, or delay the correspondence, it's on me the blame would lie."

"The letters wouldn't go the faster because you were drowned," broke in the Corporal.

"No, sir," said Billy, rather staggered by the grin of approval that met this remark. "No, sir; what you observe is true. But nobody reflects on the sintry that dies at his post."

"If you must and will go, I'll give you the yawl," said Craggs; "and I'll go with you myself."

"Spoke like a British Grenadier, cried Billy, with enthusiasm.

"Carbineer, if the same to you, master," said the other, quietly; "I never served in the infantry."

"*Tros Tyriusve mihi*," cried Billy; "which is as much as to say—

"To storm the skies, or lay siege to the moon, Give me one of the line, or a heavy dragoon;"

"It's the same to me, as the poet says."

And a low murmur of the company seemed to accord approval to the sentiment.

"I wish you'd give us a tune, Billy," said one, coaxingly.

"Or a song would be better," observed another.

"Faix," cried a third, "'tis himself could do it, and in Frinch or Latin if ye wanted it."

"The Germans was the best I ever knew for music," broke in Craggs. "I was brigaded with Arentscheld's Hanoverians in Spain; and they used to sit outside the tents every evening, and sing. By Jove! how they did sing—all together, like the swell of a church organ."

"Yes, you're right," said Billy, but evidently yielding an unwilling consent to this doctrine. "The Germans has a fine national music, and they're great for harmony. But harmony and melody is two different things."

"And which is best, Billy?" asked one of the company.

"Musha but I pity your ignorance," said Billy, with a degree of confusion that raised a hearty laugh at his expense.

"Well, but where's the song?" exclaimed another.

"Ay," said Craggs, "we are forgetting the song. Now for it, Billy; since all is going on so well above stairs, I'll draw you a gallon of ale, boys, and we'll drink to the master's speedy recovery."

It was a rare occasion when the Corporal suffered himself to expand in this fashion, and great was the applause at the unexpected munificence.

Billy at the same moment took out his fiddle, and began that process of preparatory screwing and scraping which, no matter how distressing to the surroundings, seems to afford intense delight to performers on this instrument. In the present case, it is but fair to say, there was neither comment nor impatience; on the contrary, they seemed to accept these convulsive throes of sound as an earnest of the grand flood of melody that was coming. That Billy was occupied with other thoughts than those of tuning was, however, apparent, for his lips continued to move rapidly; and at times he was seen to beat time with his foot, as though measuring out the rhythm of a verse.

"I have it now, ladies and gentlemen," he said, making a low obeisance to the company; and so saying, he struck up a very popular tune, the same to which a reverend divine wrote his words of "The night before Larry was stretched;" and in a voice of a deep and mellow fulness, managed with considerable taste sung:—

"A fig for the chansons of France,

Whose meaning is always a riddle;

The music to sing or to dance

Is an Irish tune played on the fiddle.

To your songs of the Rhine and the Rhone

I'm ready to cry out *jam satis*;

Just give some thing of our own

In praise of our Land of Potatoes.

Tol lol de lol, etc.

"What care I for sorrows of those

Who speak of their heart as a *cuore*;

How expect me to feel for the woes

Of him who calls love an *amore*!

Let me have a few words about home,

With music whose strains I'd remember,

And I'll give you all Florence and Rome,

Tho' they have a blue sky in December.

Tol lol de lol, etc.

"With a pretty face close to your own,

I'm sure there's no rayson for sighing;

Nor when walkin' beside her alone,

Why the blazes be talking of dying.

That's the way, tho' in France and in Spain,

Where love is not real, but acted,

You must always putend you're insane,

Or at laste that you're partly distracted.

Tol lol de lol, etc."

It is very unlikely that the reader will estimate Billy's impromptu as did the company; in fact, it possessed the greatest of all claims to their admiration, for it was partly incomprehensible, and by the artful introduction of a word here and there, of which his hearers knew nothing, the poet was well aware that

he was securing their heartiest approval. Nor was Billy insensible to such flatteries. The "*irritable genus*" has its soft side, can enjoy to the uttermost its own successes. It is possible, if Billy had been in another sphere, with much higher gifts, and surrounded by higher associates, that he might have accepted the homage tendered him with more graceful modesty, and seemed at least less confident of his own merits; but under no possible change of places or people could the praise have bestowed more sincere pleasure.

"You're right, there, Jim Morris," said he, turning suddenly round towards one of the company; "you never said a truer thing than that. The poetic temperament is riches to a poor man. Wherever I go—in all weathers, wet and dreary, and maybe footsore, with the bags full, and the mountain streams all flowin' over—I can just go into my own mind, just the way you'd go into an inn, and order whatever you wanted. I don't need to be a king, to sit on a throne; I don't want ships, nor coaches, nor horses to convey me to foreign lands. I can bestow kingdoms. When I haven't tuppence to buy tobacco, and without a shoe to my foot, and my hair through my hat, I can be dancin' wid princesses, and handin' empresses in to tay."

"Musha, musha!" muttered the surroundings, as though they were listening to a magician, who in a moment of unguarded familiarity descended to discuss his own miraculous gifts.

"And," resumed Billy, "it isn't only what ye are to yourself and your own heart, but what ye are to others, that without that secret bond between you, wouldn't think of you at all. I remember, once on a time, I was in the north of England travelling, partly for pleasure, and partly with a view to a small speculation in Sheffield ware—cheap penknives and scissors, pencil-cases, bodkins, and the like—and I wandered about for weeks through what they call the Lake Country, a very handsome place, but nowise grand or sublime, like what we have here in Ireland—more wood, forest timber, and better off people, but nothing beyond that!

"Well, one evening—it was in August—I came down by a narrow path to the side of a lake, where there was a stone seat, put up to see the view from, and in front was three wooden steps of stairs going down into the water, where a boat might come in. It was a lovely spot and well chosen, for you could count as many as five promontaries running out into the lake; and there was two islands, all wooded to the water's edge; and behind all, in the distance, was a great mountain, with clouds on the top; and it was just the season when the trees is beginnin' to change their colors, and there was shades of deep gold, and



dark olive, and russet brown, all mingling together with the green, and glowing in the lake below under the setting sun, and all was quiet and still as midnight; and over the water the only ripple was the track of a water-hen, as she scudded past between the islands; and if ever there was peace and tranquillity in the world it was just there! Well, I put down my pack in the leaves, for I didn't like to see or think of it, and I stretched myself down at the water's edge, and I fell into a fit of musing. It's often and often I tried to remember the elegant fancies that came through my head, and the beautiful things that I thought I saw that night out on the lake for nint me! Ye see I was fresh and fastin'; I never tasted a bit the whole day, and my brain, maybe, was all the better; for somehow janius, real janius, thrives best on a little starvation. And from musing I fell off asleep; and it was the sound of voices near that first awoke me! For a minute or two I believed I was dreaming, the words came so softly to my ear, for they were spoken in a low, gentle tone, and blended in with the slight plash of oars that moved through the water carefully, as though not to lose a word of him that was speakin'.

"It's clean beyond me to tell you what he said; and, maybe, if I could ye wouldn't be able to follow it, for he was discorsin' about night and the moon, and all that various poets said about them; ye'd think that he had books, and was reading out of them, so glibly came the verses from his lips. I never listened to such a voice before; so soft, so sweet, so musical, and the words came droppin' down, like the clear water filterin' over a rocky ledge, and glitterin' like little spangles over moss and wild flowers.

"It wasn't only in English but Scotch ballads, too, and once or twice in Italian that he recited, till at last he gave out, in all the fullness of his liquid voice, them elegant lines out of Pope's Homer:—

"As when the moon, refulgent lamp of night,  
O'er heaven's clear azure spreads her sacred light,

When not a breath disturbs the deep serene,  
And not a cloud o'ercasts the solemn scene,  
Around her throne the vivid planets roll,  
And stars unnumbered gild the glowing pole  
O'er the dark trees a yellower verdure shed,  
And top with silver every mountain's head:  
Then shine the vales; the rocks in prospect rise—

A flood of glory bursts from all the skies;  
The conscious swains rejoicing in the sight  
Eye the blue vault and bless the useful light."

"The Lord forgive me, but when he came to the last words and said, 'useful light,' I

couldn't restrain myself, but broke out, 'That's mighty like a bull, any how, and reminds me of the ould song:—

"Good luck to the moon, she's a fine noble creature,

And gives us the daylight at night in the dark.'

"Before I knew where I was, the boat glided into the steps, and a tall man, a little stooped in the shoulders, stood before me.

"Is it you," said he, with a quiet laugh, "that accuse Pope of a bull?"

"It is," says I; "and what's more, there isn't a poet from Horace downwards that I won't show bulls in; there's bulls in Shakspeare and in Milton; there's bulls in the ancients; I'll point out a bull in Aristophanes."

"What have we here?" said he, turning to the others.

"A poor crayture," says I, "like Goldsmith's chest of drawers."

"With brains reduced a double debt to pay,  
To dream by night, sell Sheffield ware by day.

"Well, with that he took a fit of laughing, and handing the rest out of the boat, he made me come along at his side, discorsin' me about my thravels, and all I seen, and all I read, till we reached an elegant little cottage on a bank right over the lake; and then he brought me in and made me take tay with the family; and I spent the night there; and when I started next morning there wasn't a 'screed' of my pack that didn't buy penknives, and whistles, and nutcrackers and all, just, as they said, for keepsakes. Good luck to them, and happy hearts, wherever they are, for they made mine happy that day; ay, and for many an hour afterwards, as I just think over the kind words and pleasant faces."

More than one of the company had dropped off asleep during Billy's narrative, and of the others, their complaisance as listeners appeared taxed to the utmost, while the Corporal snored loudly, like a man who had a right to indulge himself to the fullest extent.

"There's a bell again," muttered one; "that's from the Lord's room," and Craggs, starting up by the instinct of his office, hastened off to his master's chamber.

"My lord says you are to remain here," said he, as he re-entered a few minutes later; "he is satisfied with your skill, and I'm to send off a messenger to the post, to let them know he has detained you."

"I'm obaydint," said Billy, with a low bow, "and now for a brief repose!" And so saying, he drew a long woollen nightcap from his pocket, and putting it over his eyes, resigned himself to sleep with the practised air of one who needed but very little preparation to secure slumber.

## CHAPTER IV.

## A VISITOR.

THE old castle of Glencore contained but one spacious room, and this served all the purposes of drawing-room, dining, and library. It was a long and lofty chamber, with a raftered ceiling, from which a heavy chandelier hung by a massive chain of iron. Six windows, all in the same wall, deeply set and narrow, admitted a sparing light. In the opposite wall stood two fire-places, large, massive, and monumental; the carved supporters of the richly-chased pediment being of colossal size, and the great shield of the house crowning the pyramid of strange and uncouth objects that were grouped below. The walls were partly covered by book-shelves, partly covered by wainscot, and here and there displayed a worn-out portrait of some bygone warrior or dame, who little dreamed how much the color of their effigies should be indebted to the sad effects of damp and mildew. The furniture consisted of every imaginable type, from the carved oak and ebony console, to the white-and-gold of Versailles taste, and the modern compromise of comfort with ugliness which chintz and soft cushions accomplish. Two great screens, thickly covered with prints and drawings, most of them political caricatures of some fifty years back, flanked each fire-place, making, as it were, in this case, two different apartments.

At one of these, on a low sofa, sat, or rather lay, Lord Glencore, pale and wasted by long illness. His thin hand held a letter, to shade his eyes from the blazing wood fire, and the other hand hung listlessly at his side. The expression of the sick man's face was that of deep melancholy—not the mere gloom of recent suffering, but the deep-cut traces of a long-carried affliction, a sorrow which had eaten into his very heart, and made its home there.

At the second fire-place sat his son, and though a mere boy, the lineaments of his father marked the youth's face with a painful exactness. The same intensity was in the eyes—the same haughty character sat on the brow; and there was in the whole countenance the most extraordinary counterpart of the gloomy seriousness of the older face. He had been reading, but the fast-falling night obliged him to desist, and he sat now contemplating the bright embers of the wood fire in dreary thought. Once or twice was he disturbed from his reverie by the whispered voice of an old serving man, asking for something with that submissive manner assumed by those who are continually exposed to the outbreaks of another's temper; and at last the boy, who had hitherto scarcely deigned to notice the appeals to him, flung a bunch of keys contemptuously on the ground,

with a muttered malediction on his tormentor.

"What's that?" cried out the sick man, startled at the sound.

"'Tis nothing, my lord, but the keys that fell out of my hand," replied the old man, humbly. "Mr. Craggs is away to Leenane, and I was going to get out the wine for dinner."

"Where's Mr. Charles?" asked Lord Glencore.

"He's there beyant," muttered the other in a low voice, while he pointed towards the distant fire-place, "but he looks tired and weary, and I didn't like to disturb him."

"Tired!—weary!—with what?—where has he been?—what has he been doing?" cried he, hastily. "Charles, Charles, I say!"

And slowly rising from his seat, and with an air of languid indifference, the boy came towards him.

Lord Glencore's face darkened as he gazed on him.

"Where have you been?" asked he sternly.

"Yonder," said the boy, in an accent like the echo of his own.

"There's Mr. Craggs, now, my lord," said the old butler, as he looked out of the window, and eagerly seized the opportunity to interrupt the scene; there he is, and a gentleman with him."

"Ha! go and meet him, Charles—it's Harcourt. Go and receive him, show him his room, and then bring him here to me."

The boy heard without a word, and left the room with the same slow step and the same look of apathy. Just as he reached the hall the stranger was entering it. He was a tall, well-built man, with the mingled ease and stiffness of a soldier in his bearing; his face was handsome, but somewhat stern, and his voice had that tone which implies the long habit of command.

"You're a Massy, that I'll swear to," said he, frankly, as he shook the boy's hand; "the family face in every lineament. And how is your father?"

"Better; he has had a severe illness."

"So his letter told me. I was up the Rhine when I received it, and started at once for Ireland."

"He has been very impatient for your coming," said the boy; "he has talked of nothing else."

"Ay, we are old friends. Glencore and I have been schoolfellows, chums at college, and messmates in the same regiment," said he, with a slight touch of sorrow in his tone. Will he be able to see me now? Is he confined to bed?"

"No, he will dine with you. I'm to show you your room, and then bring you to him."



"That's better news than I hoped for, boy. By the way, what's your name?"

"Charles Conyngham."

"To be sure, Charles, how could I have forgotten it! So, Charles, this is to be my quarters, and a glorious view there is from this window—what's the mountain yonder?"

"Ben Craggan."

"We must climb that summit some of those days, Charley. I hope you're a good walker. You shall be my guide through this wild region here, for I have a passion for explorings."

And he talked away rapidly, while he made a brief toilet, and refreshed him from the fatigues of the road.

"Now, Charley, I'm at your orders; let us descend to the drawing-room."

"You'll find my father there," said the boy, as he stopped short at the door; and Harcourt, staring at him for a second or two in silence, turned the handle and entered.

Lord Glencore never turned his head as the other drew nigh, but sat with his forehead resting on the table, extending his hand only in welcome.

"My poor fellow!" said Harcourt, grasping the thin and wasted fingers, "my poor fellow, how glad I am to be with you again." And he seated himself at his side as he spoke. "You had a relapse after you wrote to me?"

Glencore slowly raised his head, and pushing back a small velvet skull-cap that he wore, said:—

"You'd not have known me, George. Eh? see how gray I am! I saw myself in the glass to-day for the first time, and I really couldn't believe my eyes."

"In another week the change will be just as great the other way. It was some kind of a fever, was it not?"

"I believe so," said the other, sighing.

"And they bled you and blistered you, of course. These fellows are like the farriers—they have but the one system for everything. Who was your torturer?—where did you get him from?"

"A practitioner of the neighborhood, the wild growth of the mountain," said Glencore, with a sickly smile; "but I mustn't be ungrateful; he saved my life, if that be a cause for gratitude."

"And a right good one, I take it. How like you that boy is, Glencore. I started back when he met me. It was just as if I was transported again to old school-days, and had seen yourself as you used to be long ago! Do you remember the long meadow, Glencore?"

"Harcourt," said he falteringly, "don't talk to me of long ago, at least not now." And then, as if thinking aloud, added, "How strange

that a man without a hope should like the future better than the past."

"How old is Charley?" asked Harcourt, anxious to engage him on some other theme.

"He'll be fifteen, I think, his next birthday; he seems older, doesn't he?"

"Yes, the boy is well grown and athletic. What has he been doing?—have you had him at a school?"

"At a school?" said Glencore, starting; "no, he has lived always here with myself. I have been his tutor—I read with him every day, till that illness seized me."

"He looks clever; is he so?"

"Like the rest of us, George, he may learn, but he can't be taught. The old obstinacy of the race is strong in him, and to rouse him to rebel all you have to do is to give him a task; but his faculties are good, his apprehension quick, and his memory, if he would but tax it, excellent. Here's Craggs come to tell us of dinner; give me your arm, George, we haven't far to go—this one room serves us for everything."

"You're better lodged than I expected: your letters told me to look for a mere barrack; and the place stands so well."

"Yes, the spot was well chosen, although I suppose its founders cared little enough about the picturesque."

The dinner-table was spread behind one of the massive screens, and under the careful direction of Craggs and old Simon, was well and amply supplied—fish and game, the delicacies of other localities, being here in abundance. Harcourt had a traveller's appetite, and enjoyed himself thoroughly, while Glencore never touched a morsel, and the boy ate sparingly, watching the stranger with that intense curiosity which comes of living estranged from all society.

"Charley will treat you to a glass of Burgundy, Harcourt," said Glencore, as they drew round the fire; "he keeps the cellar-key."

"Let us have two, Charley," said Harcourt, as the boy arose to leave the room, "and take care that you carry them steadily."

The boy stood for a second and looked at his father, as if interrogating, and then a sudden flush suffused his face as Glencore made a gesture with his hand for him to go.

"You don't perceive how you touched him to the quick there, Harcourt? You talked to him as to how he should carry the wine; he thought that office menial and beneath him, and he looked to me to know what he should do."

"What a fool you have made of the boy!" said Harcourt, bluntly. "By Jove! it was time I should come here!"

When the boy came back he was followed

by the old butler, carefully carrying in a small wicker contrivance, *Hibernice* called a cooper, three cob-webbed and well-crusted bottles.

"Now, Charley," said Harcourt, gayly, "if you want to see a man thoroughly happy, just step up to my room and fetch me a small leather sack you'll find there of tobacco, and on the dressing-table you'll see my meer-schaum-pipe; be cautious with it, for it belonged to no less a man than Ponitowski, the poor fellow who died at Leipsic."

The lad stood again irresolute and confused, when a signal from his father motioned him away to acquit the errand.

"Thank you," said Harcourt, as he re-entered; you see I am not vain of my meer-schaum without reason. The carving of those stags is a work of real art; and if you were a connoisseur in such matters, you'd say the color was perfect. Have you given up smoking, Glencore? you used to be fond of a weed."

"I care but little for it," said Glencore, sighing.

"Take to it again, my dear fellow, if only that it is a bond 'tween yourself any everyone who whiffs his cloud. There are wonderfully few habits—I was going to say enjoyments, and I might say so, but I'll call them habits—that consort so well with every condition and every circumstance of life, that become the prince and the peasant, suit the garden of the palace, and the red watch-fire of the barrack, relieve the weary hours of a calm at sea, or refresh the tired hunter in the prairies."

"You must tell Charley some of your adventures in the west. The Colonel has passed two years in the Rocky Mountains," said Glencore to his son.

"Ay, Charley, I have knocked about the world as much as most men, and seen, too, my share of its wonders. If accidents by sea and land can interest you, if you care for stories of Indian life, and the wild habits of a prairie hunter, I'm your man. Your father can tell you more of saloons and the great world, of what may be called the high game of life——"

"I have forgotten it, as much as if I had never seen it," said Glencore, interrupting, and with a severity of voice that showed the theme displeased him. And now a pause ensued, painful perhaps to the others, but scarcely felt by Harcourt, as he smoked away peacefully, and seemed lost in the windings of his own fancies.

"Have you shooting here, Glencore?" asked he at length.

"There might be, if I were to preserve the game."

"And you do not. Do you fish?"

"No; never."

"You give yourself up to farming, then?"

"Not even that; the truth is, Harcourt, I literally do nothing. A few newspapers, a stray review or so reach me in these solitudes, and keep me, in a measure, informed as to the course of events; but Charley and I con over our classics together, and scrawl sheets of paper with algebraic signs, and puzzle our heads over strange formulas, wonderfully indifferent to what the world is doing at the other side of this little estuary."

"You of all men living to lead such a life as this! a fellow that never could cram occupation enough into his short twenty-four hours," broke in Harcourt.

Glencore's pale cheek flushed slightly, and an impatient movement of his fingers on the table showed how ill he relished any allusion to his own former life.

"Charley will show you to-morrow all the wonders of our erudition, Harcourt," said he, changing the subject; "we have got to think ourselves very learned, and I hope you'll be polite enough not to undeceive us."

"You'll have a merciful critic, Charley," said the Colonel, laughing, "for more reasons than one. Had the question been how to track a wolf, or wind an antelope, to outmanœuvre a scout party, or harpoon a calf-whale, I'd not yield to many, but if you throw me amongst Greek roots, or double equations, I'm only Sampson, with his hair *en crop*!"

The solemn clock over the mantel-piece struck ten, and the boy arose as it ceased.

"That's Charley's bed-time," said Glencore, "and we are determined to make no stranger of you, George. He'll say good night."

And with a manner of mingled shyness and pride the boy held out his hand, which the soldier shook cordially, saying—

"To-morrow, then, Charley, I count upon you for my day, and so that it be not to be passed in the library I'll acquit myself creditably."

"I like your boy, Glencore," said he, as soon as they were alone. "Of course I have seen very little of him; and if I had seen more I should be but a sorry judge of what people would call his abilities; but he is a good stamp; 'gentleman' is written on him in a hand that any can read; and, by Jove! let them talk as they will, but that's half the battle of life!"

"He is a strange fellow; you'll not understand him a moment," said Glencore, smiling half sadly to himself.

"Not understand him, Glencore? I read him like print, man; you think that his shy, bashful manner imposes upon me; not a bit of it; I see the fellow is as proud as Lucifer. All your solitude and estrangement from the world, hasn't driven out of his head that he's



to be a viscount one of these days; and somehow, wherever he has picked it up, he has got a very pretty notion of the importance and rank that same title confers."

"Let us not speak of this now, Harcourt; I'm far too weak to enter upon what it would lead to. It is, however, the great reason for which I entreated you to come here. And tomorrow—at all events in a day or two—we can speak of it fully. And now I must leave you. You'll have to rough it here, George; but as there is no man can do so with a better grace, I can spare my apologies; only, I beg, don't let the place be worse than it need be. Give your orders; get what you can; and see if your tact and knowledge of life cannot remedy many a difficulty which our ignorance or apathy have served to perpetuate.

"I'll take the command of the garrison with pleasure," said Harcourt, filling up his glass, and replenishing the fire. "And now a good night's rest to you, for I half suspect I have already jeopardied some of it."

The old campaigner sat till long past midnight. The generous wine, his pipe, the cheerful wood-fire, were all companionable enough, and well-suited thoughts which took no high or heroic range, but were chiefly reveries of the past, some sad, some pleasant, but all tinged with the one philosophy, which made him regard the world as a campaign, wherein he who grumbles or repines is but a sorry soldier, and unworthy of his cloth.

It was not till the last glass was drained that he arose to seek his bed, and pleasantly humming some old air to himself, he slowly mounted the stairs to his chamber.

#### CHAPTER V.

##### COLONEL HARCOURT'S LETTER.

As we desire throughout this tale to make the actors themselves, wherever it be possible, the narrators, using their words in preference to our own, we shall now place before the reader a letter written by Colonel Harcourt about a week after his arrival at Glencore, which will at least serve to rescue him and ourselves from the task of repetition.

It was addressed to Sir Horace Upton, Her Majesty's Envoy at Stutgard, one who had formerly served in the same regiment with Glencore and himself, but who left the army early, to follow the career of diplomacy wherein, still a young man, he had risen to the rank of a minister. It is not important to the object of our story to speak more particularly of his character, than that it was in almost every respect the opposite of his correspondent. Where the one was frank, open, and unguarded, the other was cold, cautious and reserved; where one believed, the other doubted; where one was hopeful, the other

had nothing but misgivings. Harcourt would have twenty times a day wounded the feelings, or jarred against the susceptibility of his best friend; Upton could not be brought to trench upon the slightest prejudice of his greatest enemy. We might continue this contrast to every detail of their characters, but enough has now been said, and we proceed to the letter in question:—

"Glencore Castle.

"DEAR UPTON,—True to my promise to give you early tidings of our old friend, I sit down to pen a few lines, which, if a rickety table and some infernal lampblack for ink should make illegible, you'll have to wait for the elucidation till my arrival. I found Glencore terribly altered; I'd not have known him. He used to be muscular and rather full in habit; he is now a mere skeleton. His hair and moustache were coal black; they are a motley gray. He was straight as an arrow—pretentiously erect, many thought; he is stooped now, and bent nearly double. His voice, too, the most clear and ringing in the squadron, is become a hoarse whisper. You remember what a passion he had for dress, and how heartily we all deplored the chance of his being colonel, well knowing what precious caprices of costly costume would be the consequence. Well, a discharged corporal, in a cast-off mufti, is stylish compared to him. I don't think he has a hat—I have only seen an oilskin cap; but his coat, his one coat, is a curiosity of industrious patch-work; and his trowsers are a pair of our old overalls, the same pattern we wore at Hounslow when the king reviewed us.

"Great as these changes are, they are nothing to the alteration in the poor fellow's disposition. He that was generous to munificence, is now an absolute miser, descending to the most pitiful economy, and moaning over every trifling outlay. He is irritable, too, to a degree. Far from the jolly, light-hearted comrade, ready to join in the laugh against himself, and enjoy a jest of which he was the object, he suspects a slight in every allusion, and bristles up to resent a mere familiarity, as though it were an insult.

"Of course I put much of this down to the score of illness, and of bad health before he was so ill; but, depend upon it, he's not the man we knew him; heaven knows if he ever will be so again. The night I arrived here he was more natural—more like himself, in fact, than he has ever been since. His manner was heartier, and in his welcome there was a touch of the old jovial good fellow, who never was so happy as when sharing his quarters with a comrade. Since that he has grown punctilious, anxiously asking me if I am comfortable, and teasing me with apologies for

what I don't miss, and excuses about things that I should never have discovered wanting.

"I think I see what is passing within him; he wants to be confidential, and he doesn't know how to go about it. I suppose he looks on me as rather a rough father to confess to; he isn't quite sure what kind of sympathy, if any, he'll meet with from me, and he more than half dreads a certain careless, out-spoken way in which I have now and then addressed his boy, of whom more anon.

"I may be right, or I may be wrong, in this conjecture; but certain it is that nothing like confidential conversation has yet passed between us, and each day seems to render the prospect of such only less and less likely. I wish from my heart you were here; you are just the fellow to suit him—just calculated to nourish the susceptibilities that I only shock. I said as much t'other day, in a half-careless way, and he immediately caught it up, and said—"Ay, George, Upton is a man one wants now and then in life, and when the moment comes, there is no such thing as a substitute for him." In a joking manner, I then remarked, "Why not come over to see him?" "Leave this!" cried he; "venture into the world again; expose myself to its brutal insolence, or still more brutal pity!" In a torrent of passion, he went on in this strain, till I heartily regretted that I had ever touched this unlucky topic.

"I date his greatest reserve from that same moment; and I am sure he is disposed to connect me with the casual suggestion to go over to Studtgard, and deems me, in consequence, one utterly deficient in all true feeling and delicacy.

"I needn't tell you that my stay here is the reverse of a pleasure. I'm never, what fine people call, bored anywhere; and I could amuse myself gloriously in this queer spot. I have shot some half dozen seals, hooked the heaviest salmon I ever saw rise to a fly, and have had rare courting, not to say that Glencore's table, with certain reforms I have introduced, is very tolerable, and his cellar unimpeachable. I'll back his chambertin against your excellency's; and I have discovered a bin of red hermitage that would convert a whole vineyard of the smallest Lafitte into Sneyd's claret; but with all these seductions, I can't stand the life of continued constraint I'm reduced to. Glencore evidently sent for me to make some revelations, which, now that he sees me, he cannot accomplish. For aught I know, there may be as many changes in me to his eyes, as to mine there are in him. I only can vouch for it, that if I ride three stone heavier, I haven't the worse place, and I don't detect any striking falling off in my appreciation of good fare and good fellows.

"I spoke of the boy: he is a fine lad—

somewhat haughty, perhaps; a little spoiled by the country people calling him the young lord; but a generous fellow, and very like Glencore, when he first joined us at Canterbury. By way of educating him himself, Glencore has been driving Virgil and decimal fractions into him; and the boy, bred in the country—never out of it for a day—can't load a gun or tie a tackle. Not the worst thing about the boy is his inordinate love for Glencore, whom he imagines to be about the greatest and most gifted being that ever lived. I can scarcely help smiling at the implicitness of this honest faith; but I take good care not to smile; on the contrary, I give every possible encouragement to the belief. I conclude the disenchantment will arrive only too early at last.

"You'll not know what to make of such a lengthy epistle from me, and you'll doubtless torture that fine diplomatic intelligence of yours to detect the secret motive of my long-windedness; but the simple fact is, it has rained incessantly for the last three days, and promises the same cheering weather for as many more. Glencore doesn't fancy that the boy's lessons should be broken in upon—and *hinc istæ literæ*—that's classical for you.

"I wish I could say when I am likely to beat my retreat. I'd stay—not very willingly, perhaps—but still I'd stay, if I thought myself of any use; but I cannot persuade myself that I am such. Glencore is now about again, feeble of course, and much pulled down, but able to go about the house and the garden. I can contribute nothing to his recovery, and I fear as little to his comfort. I even doubt if he desires me to prolong my visit; but such is my fear of offending him, that I actually dread to allude to my departure, till I can sound my way as to how he'll take it. This fact alone will show you how much he is changed from the Glencore of long ago. Another feature in him, totally unlike his former self, struck me the other evening. We were talking of old messmates—Croydon, Stanhope, Loftus, and yourself—and instead of dwelling, as he once would have done, exclusively on your traits of character and disposition, he discussed nothing but your abilities, and the capacity by which you could win your way to honors and distinction. I needn't say how, in such a valuation, you came off best. Indeed he professes the highest esteem for your talents, and says, "You'll see Upton either a cabinet minister or ambassador at Paris yet;" and this he repeated in the same words last night, as if to show it was not dropped as a mere random observation.

"I have some scruples about venturing to offer anything bordering a suggestion to a great and wily diplomatist like yourself; but if an illustrious framer of treaties and protocols



would condescend to take a hint from an old dragoon colonel, I'd say that a few lines from your crafty pen might possibly unlock this poor fellow's heart, and lead him to unburthen to you what he evidently cannot persuade himself to reveal to me. I can see plainly enough that there is something on his mind; but I know it just as a stupid old bound feels there is a fox in the cover, but cannot for the life of him see how he's to 'draw' him.

"A letter from you would do him good, at all events; even the little gossip of your gossiping career would cheer and amuse him. He said, very plaintively, two nights ago, 'They've all forgotten me. When a man retires from the world, he begins to die, and the great event, after all, is only the *coup-de-grace* to a long agony of torture.' Do write to him, then; the address is Glencore Castle, Leenane, Ireland," where, I suppose, I shall be still a resident for another fortnight to come.

"Glencore has just sent for me; but I must close this for the post, or it will be too late.

Yours ever truly,

GEORGE HARCOURT.

"I open this to say that he sent for me to ask for your address—whether through the Foreign Office, or direct to Studtgard. You'll probably not hear for some days, for he writes with extreme difficulty, and I leave it to your wise discretion to write to him or not in the interval.

"Poor fellow, he looks very ill to-day. He says that he never slept the whole night, and that the laudanum he took to induce drowsiness, only excited and maddened him. I counselled a hot jorum of mulled porter before getting into bed; but he deemed me a monster for the recommendation, and seemed quite disgusted besides. Couldn't you send him over a despatch? I think such a document from Studtgard ought to be an unfailing soporific."

#### CHAPTER VI.

##### QUEER COMPANIONSHIP.

WHEN Harcourt repaired to Glencore's bedroom, where he still lay, wearied and feverish after a bad night, he was struck by the signs of suffering in the sick man's face. The cheeks were bloodless and fallen in, the lips pinched, and in the eyes there shone that unnatural brilliancy which results from an overwrought and over-excited brain.

"Sit down here, George," said he, pointing to a chair beside the bed; "I want to talk to you. I thought every day that I could muster courage for what I wish to say; but somehow, when the time arrived, I felt like a criminal who entreats for a few hours more of life, even though it be a life of misery."

"It strikes me that you were never less

equal to the effort than now," said Harcourt, laying his hand on the other's pulse.

"Don't believe my pulse, George," said Glencore, smiling faintly. "The machine may work badly, but it has wonderful holding out. I've gone through enough," added he, gloomily, "to kill most men, and here I am still, breathing and suffering."

"This place doesn't suit you, Glencore.—There are not above two days in the month you can venture to take the air."

"And where would you have me go, sir?" broke he in fiercely. "Would you advise Paris and the Boulevards, or a palace in the Piazza di Spagna at Rome? or perhaps the Chiaja at Naples would be public enough? Is it that I may parade disgrace and infamy through Europe, that I should leave this solitude?"

"I want to see you in a better climate, Glencore; somewhere where the sun shines occasionally."

"This suits me," said the other, bluntly; "and here I have the security that none can invade—none molest me. But it is not of myself I wish to speak—it is of my boy."

Harcourt made no reply, but sat patiently to listen to what was coming.

"It is time to think of him," added Glencore, slowly. "The other day—it seems but the other day—and he was a mere child; a few years more—to seem when past like a long dreary night—and he will be a man."

"Very true," said Harcourt; "and Charley is one of those fellows who only make one plunge from the boy into all the responsibilities of manhood. Throw him into college at Oxford, or the mess of regiment to-morrow, and this day week you'll not know him from the rest."

Glencore was silent; if he had heard he never noticed Harcourt's remark.

"Has he ever spoken to you about himself, Harcourt?" asked he, after a pause.

"Never, except when I led the subject in that direction; and even then reluctantly, as though it were a topic he would avoid."

"Have you discovered any strong inclination in him for a particular kind of life, or any career in preference to another?"

"None; and if I were only to credit what I see of him, I'd say that this dull monotony, and this dreary, uneventful existence, is what he likes best of all the world."

"You really think so," cried Glencore, with an eagerness that seemed out of proportion to the remark.

"So far as I see," rejoined Harcourt, guardedly, and not wishing to let his observation carry graver consequences than he might suspect.

"So that you deem him capable of passing a life of a quiet, unambitious tenor—neither

seeking for distinctions, nor fretting after honors."

"How should he know of their existence, Glencore? What has the boy ever heard of life and its struggles? It's not in Homer, or Sallust, he'd learn the strife of parties and public men."

"And why need he ever know them?" broke in Glencore, fiercely.

"If he doesn't know them now, he's sure to be taught them hereafter. A young fellow who will succeed to a title and a good fortune——"

"Stop, Harcourt," cried Glencore, passionately. "Has anything of this kind ever escaped you in intercourse with the boy?"

"Not a word—not a syllable."

"Has he himself ever, by a hint, or by a chance word, implied that he was aware of——"

Glencore faltered and hesitated, for the word he sought for did not present itself.—Harcourt, however, released him from all embarrassment, by saying—

"With me, the boy is rarely anything but a listener; he hears me talk away of tiger shooting, and buffalo-hunting, scarcely ever interrupting me with a question. But I can see his manner with the country people, when they salute him, and call him my lord——"

"But he is not my lord," broke in Glencore.

"Of course he is not; that I am perfectly aware of."

"He never will—never shall be," cried Glencore, in a voice to which a long pent-up passion imparted a terrible energy.

"How!—what do you mean, Glencore?" said Harcourt, eagerly. "Has he any malady?—is there any deadly taint?"

"That there is, by Heaven!" cried the sick man, grasping the curtain with one hand, while he held the other firmly clenched upon his forehead. "A taint, the deadliest that can stain a human heart! Talk of station, rank, title—what are they, if they are to be coupled with shame, ignominy, and sorrow? The loud voice of the Herald calls his father Sixth Viscount of Glencore; but a still louder one proclaims his mother a——"

With a wild burst of hysteric laughter, he threw himself, face downwards, on the bed; and now scream after scream burst from him, till the room was filled by the servants, in the midst of whom appeared Billy, who had only that same day returned from Leenane, whither he had gone to make a formal resignation of his functions as letter carrier.

"This is nothing but an '*accessio nervosa*,'" said Billy; "clear the room, ladies and gentlemen, and lave me with the patient." And Harcourt gave the signal for obedience by first taking his departure.

Lord Glencore's attack was more serious than at first it was apprehended, and for three days there was every threat of a relapse of his late fever; but Billy's skill was once more successful, and on the fourth day he declared that the danger was past. During this period, Harcourt's attention was, for the first time, drawn to the strange creature who officiated as the doctor, and who, in despite of all the detracting influences of his humble garb and mean attire, aspired to be treated with the deference due to a great physician.

"If it's the crown and the sceptre makes the king," said he, "'tis the same with the science that makes the doctor; and no man can be despised when he has a rag of ould Galen's mantle to cover his shoulders."

"So you're going to take blood from him?" asked Harcourt, as he met him on the stairs, where he had awaited his coming one night when it was late.

"No, sir; 'tis more a disturbance of the great nervous centres than any decayin' of the heart and arteries," said Billy, pompously; "that's what shows a real doctor, to distinguish between the effects of excitement and inflammation, which is as different as fireworks is from a bombardment."

"Not a bad simile, Master Billy; come in and drink a glass of brandy-and-water with me," said Harcourt, right glad at the prospect of such companionship.

Billy Traynor too, was flattered by the invitation, and seated himself at the fire with an air at once proud and submissive.

"You've a difficult patient to treat there," said Harcourt, when he had furnished his companion with a pipe, and twice filled his glass; "he's hard to manage, I take it?"

"Yer' right," said Billy; "every touch is a blow, every breath of air is a hurricane with him. There's no such thing as tratin' a man of that temperament; it's the same with many of them ould families as with our race horses, they breed them too fine."

"Egad, I think you are right," said Harcourt, pleased with an illustration that suited his own modes of thinking.

"Yes, sir," said Billy, gaining confidence by the approval; "a man is a *mā-chine*, and all the parts ought to be balanced, and as the ancients say, in *equilibrio*. If you give a preponderance here or there, whether it be brain or spinal marrow, cardiac functions or digestive ones, you distroy him, and make that dangerous kind of constitution that, like a horse with a hard mouth, or a boat with a weather helm, always runs to one side."

"That's well put, well explained," said Harcourt, who really thought the illustration appropriate.

"Now my lord there," continued Billy, "is all out of balance, every bit of him. Bleed



him, and he sinks; stimulate him, and he goes ragin mad. 'Tis their physical conformation makes their character; and to know how to cure them in sickness, one ought to have some knowledge of them in health."

"How came you to know all this? You are a very remarkable fellow, Billy."

"I am, sir; I'm a phenomenon in a small way. And many people thinks, when they see and converse with me, what a pity it is I hav'nt the advantages of edication and instruction, and that s' just where they're wrong, completely wrong."

"Well, I confess I don't perceive that."

"I'll show you, then. There's a kind of janius natural to men like myself, in Ireland, I mean, for I never herd of it elsewhere. That's just like our Irish emerald or Irish diamond, wonderful if one considers where you find it—astonishin' if you only think how azy it is to get, but a regular disappointment, a downright take-in, if you intend to have it cut, and polished and set. No, sir; with all the care and culture in life, you'll never make a precious stone of it!"

"You've not taken the right way to convince me, by using such an illustration, Billy."

"I'll try another, then," said Billy. "We are like Willy-the-Whisps, showing plenty of light where there's no road to travel, but of no manner of use on the highway, or in the dark streets of a village where one has business."

"Your own services here are the refutation to your argument, Billy," said Harcourt, filling his glass.

"'Tis your kindness to say so, sir," said Billy, with gratified pride; "but the sacrat was, he thrust me—that was the whole of it. All the miracles of physic is confidence, just as all the magic of eloquence is conviction."

"You have reflected profoundly, I see," said Harcourt.

"I made a great many observations at one time of my life—the opportunity was favorable."

"When and how was that?"

"I travelled with a baste caravan for two years, sir; and there's nothing teaches one to know mankind like the study of bastes!"

"Not complimentary to humanity, certainly," said Harcourt, laughing.

"Yes, but it is, though; for it is by a consideration of the *feræ nature* that you get at the real nature of mere animal existence. You see there man in the rough, as a body might say, just as he was turned out of the first workshop, and before he was fettered with the *divinus afflatus*, the æthereal essence, that makes him the first of creation. There's all the qualities good and bad—love, hate, vengeance, gratitude, grief, joy, ay and mirth—

there they are in the brutes; but they're in no subjection, except by fear. Now it's out of man's motives his character is moulded, and fear is only one amongst them. D'ye apprehend me?"

"Perfectly; fill your pipe." And he pushed the tobacco towards him.

"I will; and I'll drink the memory of the great and good man that first introduced the weed amongst us.—Here's Sir Walter Raleigh. By the same token, I was in his house, last week."

"In his house! where?"

"Down at Greyhall. You Englishmen, savin' your presence, always forget that many of your celebrities lived years in Ireland. For it was the same long ago as now—a place of decent banishment for men of janius—a kind of straw yard where ye turned out your intellectual hunters till the sayson came on at home."

"I'm sorry to see, Billy, that, with all your enlightenment, you have the vulgar prejudice against the Saxon."

"And that's the rayson I have it, because it is vulgar," said Billy, eagerly. Vulgar means popular, common to many; and what's the best test of truth in anything but universal belief, or whatever comes nearest to it. I wish I was in Parliament—I just wish I was there the first night one of the nobs calls out 'that's vulgar; and I'd just say to him, 'Is there anything as vulgar as men and women? Show me one good thing in life that isn't vulgar? Show me an object a painter copies, or a poet describes, that isn't so?' Ayeh," cried he impatiently, "when they wanted a hard word to fling at us, why didn't they take the right one?"

"But you are unjust, Billy; the ungenerous tone ye speak of is fast disappearing. Gentlemen now-a-days use no disparaging epithets to men poorer or less happily circumstanced than themselves."

"Faix," said Billy, "it isn't sitting here, at the same table with yourself, that I ought to gainsay that remark."

And Harcourt was so struck by the air of good breeding in which he spoke, that he grasped his hand, and shook it warmly.

"And what is more," continued Billy, "from this day out I'll never think so."

He drank off his glass as he spoke, giving to the libation all the ceremony of a solemn vow.

"D'ye hear that?—them's oars; there's a boat coming in."

"You have sharp hearing, master," said Harcourt, laughing.

"I got the gift when I was a smuggler," replied he. "I could put my ear to the ground of a still night, and tell you the tramp of a revenue boot as well as if I seen it. And now I'll lay sixpence it's Pat Morissy is at the bow-oar

there; he rows with a short jerking stroke there's no timing. That's himself, and it must be something urgent from the post-office that brings him over the Lough to-night."

The words were scarcely spoken when Craggs entered with a letter in his hand.

"This is for you, Colonel," said he; "it was marked 'immediate,' and the post-mistress despatched it by express."

The letter was a very brief one; but, in honor to the writer, we shall give it a chapter to itself.

#### CHAPTER VII.

##### A GREAT DIPLOMATIST.

"MY DEAR HARCOURT,—I arrived here yesterday, and by good fortune caught your letter at the F. O., where it was awaiting the departure of the messenger for Germany.

"Your account of poor Glencore is most distressing. At the same time, my knowledge of the man and his temper in a measure prepared me for it. You say that he wished to see me, and intends to write. Now there is a small business matter between us, which his lawyer seems much disposed to push on to a difficulty, if not to worse. To prevent this, if possible, at all events to see whether a visit from me might not be serviceable, I shall cross over to Ireland on Tuesday, and be with you by Friday, or at furthest Saturday. Tell him that I am coming, but only for a day. My engagements are such that I must be here again early in the following week. On Thursday I go down to Windsor.

"There is wonderfully little stirring here, but I keep that little for our meeting. You are aware, my dear friend, what a poor, shattered, broken-down fellow I am; so that I need not ask you to give me a comfortable quarter for one night, and some shell-fish, if easily procurable, for my one dinner.

"Yours, ever and faithfully,  
"H. U."

We have already told our reader that the note was a brief one, and yet was it not altogether uncharacteristic. Sir Horace Upton—it will spare us both some repetition if we present him at once—was one of a very composite order of human architecture; a kind of being, in fact, of which many would deny the existence till they met and knew them, so full of contradictions, real and apparent, was his nature. Chivalrous in sentiment and cunning in action, noble in aspiration, and utterly sceptical as to such a thing as principal, one-half of his temperament was the antidote to the other. Fastidious to a painful extent in matters of taste, he was simplicity itself in all the requirements of his life, and with all a courtier's love of great people, not only tolerating but actu-

ally preferring, the society of men beneath him. In person he was tall, and with that air of distinction in his manner that belongs only to those who unite natural graces with long habits of high society. His features were finely formed, and would have been actually handsome, were the expression not spoiled by a look of astuteness—a something that implied a tendency to overreach—which marred their repose and injured their uniformity. Not that his manner ever betrayed this weakness; far from it—his was a most polished courtesy. It was impossible to conceive an address more bland or more conciliating. His very gestures, his voice, languid by a slight habit of indisposition, seemed as though exerted above their strength in the desire to please, and making the object of his attentions to feel himself the mark of peculiar honor. There ran through all his nature, through everything he did, or said, or thought, a certain haughty humility, which served, while it assigned an humble place to himself, to mark out one still more humble for those about him. There were not many things he could not do; indeed he had actually done most of those which win honor and distinction in life. He had achieved a very gallant but brief military career in India, made a most brilliant opening in Parliament, where his abilities at once marked him out for office, was suspected to be the writer of the cleverest political satire, and more, than suspected to be the author of the novel of the day. With all this, he had great social success. He was deep enough for a ministerial dinner, and "fast" enough for a party of young Guardsmen at Greenwich. With women, too, he was especially a favorite; there was a Machiavellian subtlety which he could throw into small things—a mode of making the veriest trifles, little Chinese puzzles of ingenuity that flattered and amused them. In a word, he had great adaptiveness, and it was a quality he indulged less for the gratification of others than for the pleasure it afforded himself.

He had mixed largely in society, not only of his own, but of every country of Europe. He knew every chord of that complex instrument which people call the world, like a master; and although a certain jaded and wearied look, a tone of exhaustion and fatigue, seemed to say that he was tired of it all, that he had found it barren and worthless, the real truth was, he enjoyed life to the full as much as on the first day in which he entered it; and for this simple reason, that he had started with an humble opinion of mankind, their hopes, fears, and ambitions, and so he continued, not disappointed, to the end.

The most governing notion of his whole life was an impression that he had a disease of the chest, some subtle and mysterious affection which had defied the doctors, and would



go on to defy them to the last. To suggest to him that his malady had any affinity to any known affection was to outrage him, since the mere supposition would reduce him to a species of equality with some one else—a thought infinitely worse than any mere physical suffering; and, indeed, to avoid this shocking possibility, he vacillated as to the locality of his disorder, making it now in the lung, now in the heart—at one time in the bronchial tubes, at another in the valves of the aorta. It was his pleasure to consult for this complaint every great physician of Europe, and not alone consult, but commit himself to their direction, and this with a credulity which he could scarcely have summoned in any other cause.

It was difficult to say how far he himself believed in this disorder—the pressure of any momentous event, the necessity of action, never finding him unequal to any effort, no matter how onerous. Give him a difficulty, a minister to outwit, a secret scheme to unravel, a false move to profit by, and he rose above all his pulmonary symptoms, and could exert himself with a degree of power and perseverance that very few men could equal, none surpass. Indeed it seemed as though he kept this malady for the pastime of idle hours, as other men do a novel or a newspaper, but would never permit it to interfere with the graver business of life.

We have, perhaps, been prolix in our description, but we have felt it the more requisite to be thus diffuse, since the studious simplicity which marked all his manner might have deceived our reader, and which the impression of his mere words have failed to convey.

"You will be glad to hear Upton is in England, Glencore," said Harcourt, as the sick man was assisted to his seat in the library, "and, what is more, intends to pay you a visit."

"Upton coming here!" exclaimed Glencore, with an expression of mingled astonishment and confusion—"how do you know that?"

"He writes me from Long's to say that he'll be with us by Friday, or, if not, by Saturday."

"What a miserable place to receive him," exclaimed Glencore. "As for you, Harcourt, you know how to rough it, and have bivouacked too often under the stars to care much for satin curtains. But think of Upton here! How is he to eat?—where is he to sleep?"

"By Jove, we'll treat him handsomely. Don't you fret yourself about his comforts;

besides, I've seen a great deal of Upton, and with all his fastidiousness and refinement, he's a thorough good fellow at taking things for the best. Invite him to Chatsworth, and the chances are he'll find twenty things to fault—with the place, the cookery, and the servants; but take him down to the Highlands, lodge him in a shieling, with bannocks for breakfast and a Fyne herring for supper, and I'll wager my life you'll not see a ruffle in his temper, nor hear a word of impatience out of his mouth."

"I know that he is a well-bred gentleman," said Glencore, half pettishly; "but I have no fancy for putting his good manners to a severe test, particularly at the cost of my own feelings."

"I tell you again he shall be admirably treated; he shall have my room; and, as for his dinner, Master Billy and I are going to make a raid amongst the lobster-pots. And what with turbot, oysters, grouse-pie, and mountain mutton, I'll make the diplomatist sorrow that he is not accredited to some native sovereign in the Arran islands, instead of some 'mere German Hertzog.' He can only stay one day."

"One day!"

"That's all; he is over head-and-ears in business, and he goes down to Windsor on Thursday, so that there is no help for it."

"I wish I may be strong enough; I hope to heaven that I may rally—" Glencore stopped suddenly as he got thus far, but the agitation the words cost him seemed most painful.

"I say again, don't distress yourself about Upton—leave the care of entertaining him to me. I'll vouch for it that he leaves us well satisfied with his welcome."

"It was not of that I was thinking," said he, impatiently; "I have much to say to him—things of great importance. It may be that I shall be unequal to the effort; I cannot answer for my strength for a day—not for an hour. Could you not write to him, and ask him to defer his coming till such time as he can spare me a week, or at least some days?"

"My dear Glencore, you know the man well, and that we are lucky if we can have him here on his *own* terms, not to think of imposing *ours*; he is sure to have a number of engagements while he is in England."

"Well, be it so," said Glencore, sighing, with the air of a man resigning himself to an inevitable necessity.

## CHAPTER VIII.

## THE GREAT MAN'S ARRIVAL.

"NOT come, Craggs!" said Harcourt, as, late on the Saturday evening, the Corporal stepped on shore, after crossing the Lough.

"No, sir, no sign of him. I sent a boy away to the top of 'the Devil's Mother,' where you have a view of the road for eight miles, but there was nothing to be seen."

"You left orders at the post-office to have a boat in readiness if he arrived?"

"Yes, Colonel," said he, with a military salute; and Harcourt now turned moodily towards the Castle.

Glencore had scarcely ever been a very cheery residence, but latterly it had become far gloomier than before. Since the night of Lord Glencore's sudden illness, there had grown up a degree of constraint between them, which, to a man of Harcourt's disposition, was positive torture. They seldom met, save at dinner, and then their reserve was painfully evident.

The boy, too, in unconscious imitation of his father, grew more and more distant; and poor Harcourt saw himself in that position, of all others the most intolerable—the unwilling guest of an unwilling host.

"Come or not come," muttered he to himself, "I'll bear this no longer. There is, besides, no reason why I should bear it. I'm of no use to the poor fellow; he does not want—he never sees me. If anything, my presence is irksome to him; so that, happen what will, I'll start to-morrow, or next day at farthest."

He was one of those men to whom deliberation on any subject was no small labor; but who, once that they have come to a decision, feel as if they had acquitted a debt, and need give themselves no further trouble in the matter. In the enjoyment of this newly-purchased immunity he entered the room, where Glencore sat impatiently awaiting him.

"Another disappointment!" said the Viscount, anxiously.

"Yes; Craggs has just returned, and says there's no sign of a carriage for miles on the Oughterard road."

"I ought to have known it," said the other, in a voice of guttural sternness. "He was ever the same; an appointment with him was an engagement meant only to be binding on those who expected him."

"Who can say what may have detained him. He was in London on business—public business, too; and even if he had left town, how many chance delays there are in travelling."

"I have said every one of these things over to myself, Harcourt; but they don't satisfy me. This is a habit with Upton. I've seen

him do the same with his Colonel, when he was a subaltern; I've heard of his arriving late to a court dinner, and only smiling at the dismay of the horrified courtiers."

"Egad," said Harcourt, bluntly, "I don't see the advantage of the practice. One is so certain of doing fifty things in this daily life to annoy one's friends, through mere inadvertence or forgetfulness, that I think it is but sorry fun to incur their ill-will by *malice prepense*."

"That is precisely why he does it."

"Come, come, Glencore; old Rixson was right when he said—'Heaven help the man whose merits are canvassed while they wait dinner for him.' I'll order up the soup, for if we wait any longer we'll discover Upton to be the most worthless vagabond that ever walked."

"I know his qualities, good and bad," said Glencore, rising and pacing the room with slow, uncertain steps; "few men know him better. None need tell me of his abilities; none need instruct me as to his faults. What others do by accident, he does by design.—He started in life by examining how much the world would bear from him; he has gone on, profiting by the experience, and improving on the practice."

"Well, if I don't mistake me much, he'll soon appear to plead his own cause. I hear oars coming speedily in this direction."

And so saying, Harcourt hurried away to resolve his doubts at once. As he reached the little jetty, over which a large signal-fire threw a strong red light, he perceived that he was correct, and was just in time to grasp Upton's hand as he stepped on shore.

"How picturesque all this, Harcourt," said he, in his soft, low voice; "a leaf out of 'Rob Roy.' Well, am I not the mirror of punctuality, eh?"

"We looked for you yesterday, and Glencore has been so impatient."

"Of course he has; it is the vice of your men who do nothing. How is he? Does he dine with us? Fritz, take care those leather pillows are properly aired, and see that my bath is ready by ten o'clock. Give me your arm, Harcourt; what a blessing it is to be such a strong fellow."

"So it is, by Jove; I am always thankful for it. And you—how do you get on? You look well."

"Do I?" said he, faintly, and pushing back his hair with an almost fine-ladylike affectation. "I'm glad you say so. It always rallies me a little to hear I'm better. You had my letter about the fish?"

"Ay, and I'll give you such a treat."

"No, no, my dear Harcourt; a fried mackerel, a whiting and a few crumbs of bread—nothing more."



"If you insist, it shall be so; but I promise you I'll not be of your mess, that's all. This is a glorious spot for turbot—and such oysters!"

"Oysters are forbidden me, and don't let me have the torture of temptation. What a charming place this seems to be—very wild, very rugged."

"Wild—rugged? I should think it is," muttered Harcourt.

"This pathway, though, does not bespeak much care. I wish our friend yonder would hold his lantern a little lower. How I envy you the kind of life you lead here—so tranquil, so removed from all bores. By the way, you get the newspapers tolerably regularly?"

"Yes, every day."

"That's all right. If there be a luxury left to any man after the age of forty, it is to be let alone. It's the best thing I know of.—What a terrible bit of road! They might have made a pathway."

"Come, don't grow fainthearted. Here we are; this is Glencore."

"Wait a moment. Just let him raise that lantern. Really this is very striking—a very striking scene altogether. The doorway excellent, and that little watch-tower, with its lone star-light, a perfect picture."

"You'll have time enough to admire all this; and we are keeping poor Glencore waiting," said Harcourt, impatiently.

"Very true; so we are."

"Glencore's son, Upton," said Harcourt, presenting the boy, who stood, half pride, half bashfulness, in the porch.

"My dear boy, you see one of your father's oldest friends in the world," said Upton, throwing one arm on the boy's shoulder, apparently caressing, but as much to aid himself in ascending the stair. "I'm charmed with your old Schloss here, my dear," said he, as they moved along. "Modern architects cannot attain the massive simplicity of these structures. They have a kind of confectionery style, with false ornament and inappropriate decoration, that bears about the same relation to the original that a suit of Drury-lane tinfoil does to a coat of Milanese mail armor. This gallery is in excellent taste."

And as he spoke, the door in front of him opened, and the pale, sorrow-struck, and sickly figure of Glencore stood before him.—Upton, with all his self-command, could scarcely repress an exclamation at the sight of one whom he had seen last in all the pride of youth and great personal powers; while Glencore, with the instinctive acuteness of his morbid temperament, as quickly saw the impression he had produced, and said, with a deep sigh—

"Ay, Horace—a sad wreck."

"Not so, my dear fellow," said the other, taking the thin, cold hand within both his own; "as seaworthy as ever, after a little dry-

docking and re-fitting. It is only a craft like that yonder," and he pointed to Harcourt, "that can keep the sea in all weathers, and never care for the carpenter. You and I are of another build."

"And you—how are you?" asked Glencore, relieved to turn attention away from himself, while he drew his arm within the other's.

"The same poor ailing mortal you always knew me," said Upton, languidly; "doomed to a life of uncongenial labor, condemned to climates totally unsuited to me, I drag along existence, only astonished at the trouble I take to live, knowing pretty well as I do what life is worth."

"Jolly companions every one!" By Jove!" said Harcourt; "for a pair of fellows who were born on the sunny side of the road, I must say you are marvellous instances of gratitude."

"That excellent hippopotamus," said Upton, "has no thought for any calamity if it does not derange his digestion! How glad I am to see the soup! Now, Glencore, you shall witness no invalid's appetite."

As the dinner proceeded, the tone of conversation grew gradually lighter and pleasanter. Upton had only to permit his powers to take their free course to be agreeable, and now talked away on whatever came uppermost, with a charming union of reflectiveness with repartee. If a very rigid purist might take exception to occasional Gallicisms in expression, and a constant leaning to French modes of thought, none could fail to be delighted with the graceful ease with which he wandered from theme to theme, adorning each with some trait of that originality which was his chief characteristic. Harcourt was pleased without well knowing how or why, while to Glencore it brought back the memory of the days of happy intercourse with the world, and all the brilliant hours of that polished circle in which he had lived. To the pleasure, then, which his powers conferred, there succeeded an impression of deep melancholy, so deep as to attract the notice of Harcourt, who hastily asked—

"If he felt ill?"

"Not worse," said he, faintly, "but weak—wearily; and I know Upton will forgive me if I say, good night."

"What a wreck indeed!" exclaimed Upton, as Glencore left the room with his son. "I'd not have known him!"

"And yet until the last half hour I have not seen him so well for weeks past."

"I'm afraid something you said about Alicia Villars affected him," said Harcourt.

"My dear Harcourt, how young you are in all these things," said Upton, as he lighted his cigarette. "A poor heart-stricken fellow,

like Glencore, no more cares for what *you* would think a painful allusion, than an old weather-beaten sailor would for a breezy morning on the Downs at Brighton. His own sorrows lie too deeply moored to be disturbed by the light winds that ruffle the surface. And to think that all this is a woman's doing! Isn't that what's passing in your mind, eh, most gallant Colonel?"

"By Jove, and so it was! They were the very words I was on the point of uttering," said Harcourt, half nettled at the ease with which the other read him.

"And of course you understand the source of the sorrow?"

"I am not quite so sure of that," said Harcourt, more and more piqued at the tone of bantering superiority with which the other spoke.

"Yes, you do, Harcourt; I know you better than you know yourself. Your thoughts were these: Here's a fellow with a title, a good name, good looks, and a fine fortune, going out of the world of a broken heart, and all for a woman!"

"You knew her," said Harcourt, anxious to divert the discussion from himself.

"Intimately. Ninetta del la Torre was the belle of Florence—what am I saying, of all Italy—when Glencore met her about fifteen years ago. The Palazzo della Torre was the best house in Florence. The old prince, her grandfather—her father was killed in the Russian campaign—was spending the last remnant of an immense fortune in every species of extravagance. Entertainments that surpassed those of the Pitti Palace in splendor, fêtes that cost fabulous sums, banquets voluptuous as those of ancient Rome, were things of weekly occurrence. Of course every foreigner, with any pretension to the distinction, sought to be presented there, and we English happened just at that moment to stand tolerably high in Italian estimation. I am speaking of some fifteen or twenty years back, before we sent out that swarm of domestic economists, who, under the somewhat erroneous notion of foreign cheapness, by a system of incessant higgles and bargains, cutting down every one's demand to the measure of their own pockets, and by making the word Englishman a synonym for all that is mean, shabby, and contemptible. The English of that day were of another class; and assuredly their characteristics, as regards munificence and high dealing, must have been strongly impressed upon the minds of foreigners, seeing how their successors, very different people, have contrived to trade upon the mere memory of these qualities ever since."

"Which all means, that, my lord stood cheating better than those who came after him," said Harcourt, bluntly.

"He did so; and precisely for that very reason he conveyed the notion of a people who do not place money in the first rank of all their speculations, and who aspire to no luxury that they have not a just right to enjoy. But to come back to Glencore. He soon became a favored guest at the Palazzo della Torre. His rank, name, and station, combined with very remarkable personal qualities, obtained for him a high place in the old Prince's favor, and Ninetta deigned to accord him a little more notice than she bestowed on any one else. I have, in the course of my career, had occasion to obtain a near view of royal personages and their habits, and I can say with certainty, that never in any station, no matter how exalted, have I seen as haughty a spirit as in that girl. To the pride of her birth, rank, and splendid mode of life, were added the consciousness of her surpassing beauty, and the graceful charm of a manner quite unequalled. She was incomparably superior to all around her, and, strangely enough, she did not offend by the bold assertion of this superiority. It seemed her due, and no more. Nor was it the assumption of mere flattered beauty. Her house was the resort of persons of the very highest station, and in the midst of them—some even of royal blood—she exacted all the deference and all the homage that she required from others."

"And they accorded it?" asked Harcourt, half contemptuously.

"They did; and so had you also if you had been in their place! Believe me, most gallant Colonel, there is a wide difference between the empty pretension of mere vanity and the daring assumption of conscious power. This girl saw the influence she wielded. As she moved amongst us she beheld the homage, not always willing, that awaited her. She felt that she had but to distinguish any one man there, and he became for the time as illustrious as though touched by the sword or ennobled by the star of his sovereign. The courtier-like attitude of men, in the presence of a very beautiful woman, is a spectacle full of interest. In the homage vouchsafed to mere rank there enters always a sense of humiliation, and in the observances of respect men tender to royalty, the idea of vassalage presents itself most prominently; whereas in the other case, the chivalrous devotion is not alloyed by this meaner servitude, and men never lift their heads more haughtily than after they have bowed them in lowly deference to loveliness."

A thick, short snort from Harcourt here startled the speaker, who, inspired by the sounds of his own voice and the flowing periods he uttered, had fallen into one of those paroxysms of loquacity which now and then befel him. That his audience should have



thought him tiresome or prosy, would, indeed, have seemed to him something strange; but that his hearer should have gone off asleep, was almost incredible.

"It is quite true," said Upton to himself; "he snores 'like a warrior taking his rest.'—What wonderful gifts some fellows are endowed with! and to enjoy life, there is none of them all like dulness. Can you show me to my room?" said he, as Craggs answered his ring at the bell.

The Corporal bowed an assent.

"The Colonel usually retires early, I suppose?" said Upton.

"Yes, sir; at ten to a minute."

"Ah! it is one—nearly half-past one—now, I perceive," said he, looking at his watch.—"That accounts for his drowsiness," muttered he between his teeth. "Curious vegetables are these old campaigners. Wish him good night for me when he awakes, will you?"

And so saying, he proceeded on his way, with all that lassitude and exhaustion which it was his custom to throw into every act which demanded the slightest exertion.

"Any more stairs to mount, Mr. Craggs?" said he, with a bland but sickly smile.

"Yes, sir; two flights more."

"Oh, dear! couldn't you have disposed of me on the lower floor?—I don't care where or how, but something that requires no climbing. It matters little, however, for I'm only here for a day."

"We could fit up a small room, sir, off the library."

"Do so, then. A most humane thought; for if I *should* remain another night. Not at it yet?" cried he peevishly, at the aspect of an almost perpendicular stair before him.

"This is the last flight, sir; and you'll have a splendid view for your trouble, sir, when you awake in the morning."

"There is no view ever repaid the toil of an ascent, Mr. Craggs, whether it be to an attic or the Righi. Would you kindly tell my servant Mr. Schöfer where to find me, and let him fetch the pillows, and put a little rosemary in a glass of water in the room—it corrects the odor of the night-lamp. And I should like my coffee early—say at seven, though I don't wish to be disturbed afterwards. Thank you, Mr. Craggs—Good night! Oh! one thing more. You have a doctor here. Would you just mention to him that I should like to see him to-morrow about nine or half-past? Good night—good night."

And with a smile worthy of bestowal upon a court beauty, and a gentle inclination of the head, the very ideal of gracefulness, sir Horace dismissed Mr. Craggs, and closed the door.

## CHAPTER IX.

## A MEDICAL VISIT.

Mr. Schöfer moved through the dimly lighted chamber with all the cat-like stealthiness of an accomplished valet, arranging the various articles of his master's wardrobe, and giving, so far as he was able, the semblance of an accustomed spot to this new and strange locality. Already, indeed, it was very unlike what it had been during Harcourt's occupation. Guns, whips, fishing-tackle, dog-leashes, and landing-nets, had all disappeared, as well as uncouth specimens of costume for boating or the chase; and in their place were displayed all the accessories of an elaborate toilet, laid out with a degree of pomp and ostentation somewhat in contrast to the place. A richly-embroidered dressing-gown lay on the back of a chair, before which stood a pair of velvet slippers worked in gold. On the table in front of these, a whole regiment of bottles, of varied shape and color, were ranged, the contents being curious essences and delicate odors, every one of which entered into some peculiar stage of that elaborate process Sir Horace Upton went through, each morning of his life, as a preparation for the toils of the day.

Adjoining the bed stood a smaller table, covered with various medicaments, tinctures, essences, infusions, and extracts, whose subtle qualities he was well skilled in, and but for whose timely assistance he would not have believed himself capable of surviving throughout the day. Beside these was a bulky file of prescriptions, the learned documents of doctors of every country of Europe, all of whom had enjoyed their little sunshine of favor, and all of whom had ended by "mistaking his case." These had now been placed in readiness for the approaching consultation with "Glencore's doctor;" and Mr. Schöfer still glided noiselessly from place to place, preparing for that event.

"I'm not asleep, Fritz," said a weak, plaintive voice from the bed. "Let me have my aconite—eighteen drops; a full dose to-day, for this journey has brought back the pains."

"Yes, Excellenz," said Fritz, in a voice of broken accentuation.

"I slept badly," continued his master in the same complaining tone. The sea beat so heavily against the rocks, and the eternal plash, plash, all night irritated and worried me. Are you giving me the right tincture?"

"Yes, Excellenz," was the brief reply.

"You have seen the doctor—what is he like, Fritz?"

A strange grimace and a shrug of the shoulders was Mr. Schöfer's only answer.

"I thought as much," said Upton, with a heavy sigh. "They called him the wild growth

of the mountains last night, and I fancied what that was like to prove. Is he young?"

A shake of the head implied not.

"Nor old?"

Another similar movement answered the question.

"Give me a comb, Fritz, and fetch the glass here?" And now, Sir Horace arranged his silky hair more becomingly, and having exchanged one or two smiles with his image in the mirror, lay back on the pillow, saying, "Tell him I'm ready to see him?"

Mr. Schöfer proceeded to the door, and at once presented the obsequious figure of Billy Traynor, who, having heard some details of the rank and quality of his new patient, made his approaches with a most deferential humility. It was true, Billy knew that my Lord Glencore's rank was above that of Sir Horace, but to his eyes there was the far higher distinction of a man of undoubted ability—a great speaker, a great writer, a great diplomatist,—and Billy Traynor, for the first time in his life, found himself in the presence of one whose claims to distinction stood upon the lofty basis of personal superiority. Now, though bashfulness was not the chief characteristic of his nature, he really felt abashed and timid as he drew near the bed, and shrunk under the quick but searching glance of the sick man's cold gray eyes.

"Place a chair, and leave us, Fritz," said Sir Horace; and then turning slowly round, smiled as he said, "I'm happy to make your acquaintance, sir. My friend, Lord Glencore, has told me with what skill you treated him, and I embrace the fortunate occasion to profit by your professional ability."

"I'm your humble slave, sir," said Billy, with a deep, rich brogue; and the manner of the speaker, and his accent, seemed so to surprise Upton, that he continued to stare at him fixedly for some seconds without speaking.

"You studied in Scotland, I believe," said he, with one of his most engaging smiles, while he hazarded the question.

"Indeed then, I did not, sir," said Billy, with a heavy sigh; "all I know of the *ars medicatrix* I picked up—*currendo per campos*—as one may say, vagabondizing through life, and watching my opportunities. Nature gave me the Hippocratic turn, and I did my best to improve it."

"So that you never took out a regular diploma?" said Sir Horace, with another and still blander smile.

"Sorra one, sir! I'm a doctor just as a man is a poet—by sheer janius! 'Tis the study of nature makes both one and the other; that is, when there's the real stuff—the *aureous afflatus*—inside. Without you have that you're only a rhymster or a quack."

"You would then trace a parallel between them!" said Upton, graciously.

To be sure, sir! ould Heyric says, that the poet and the physician is one:—

"For he who reads the clouded skies,

And knows the utterings of the deep,

Can surely see in human eyes

The sorrows that so heart-locked sleep."

The human system is just a kind of universe of its own; and the very same faculties that investigate the laws of nature in one case is good in the other."

"I don't think the author of 'King Arthur' supports your theory," said Upton, gently.

"Blackmore was an ass; but maybe he was as great a bosthoon in physic as in poetry," rejoined Billy promptly.

"Well, doctor, said Sir Horace, with one of those plaintive sighs in which he had habitually opened the narrative of his own suffering, "let us descend to meaner things, and talk of myself. You see before you one who, in some fashion, is the reproach of medicine. That file of prescriptions beside you will show that I have consulted almost every celebrity in Europe; and that I have done so unsuccessfully, it is only necessary that you should look on these worn looks—these wasted fingers—this sickly, feeble frame. Vouchsafe me a patient hearing for a few moments, while I give you some insight into one of the most intricate cases, perhaps, that has ever engaged the faculty."

It is not our intention to follow Sir Horace through his statement, which in reality comprised a sketch of half the ills that the flesh is heir to. Maladies of heart, brain, liver, lungs, the nerves, the arteries, even the bones, contributed their aid to swell the dreary catalogue, which, indeed, contained the usual contradictions and exaggerations incidental to such histories. We could not assuredly expect from our reader the patient attention with which Billy listened to this narrative. Never by a word did he interrupt the description; not even a syllable escaped him as he sat; and even when Sir Horace had finished speaking, he remained with slightly drooped head and clasped hands in deep meditation.

"It's a strange thing," said he, at last; "but the more I see of the aristocracy, the more I'm convinced that they ought to have doctors for themselves alone, just as they have their own tailors and coachmakers—chaps that could devote themselves to the study of physic for the peerage, and never think of any other disorders but them that befall people of rank. Your mistake, Sir Horace, was in consulting the regular middle-class practitioner, who invariably imagined there must be a disease to treat."



"And you set me down as a hypochondriac, then?" said Upton, smiling.

"Nothing of the kind! You have a malady sure enough, but nothing organic. 'Tis the oceans of tinctures, the sieves-full of pills, the quarter-casks of bitters you're takin', has played the devil with you. The human machine is like a clock, and it depends on the proportion the parts bear to each other, whether it keeps time. You may make the spring too strong, or the chain too thick, or the balance too heavy for the rest of the works, and spoil everything just by over security. That's what your doctors was doing with their tonics and cordials. They didn't see, here's a poor washy frame, with a wake circulation and no vigor. If we nourish him his heart will go quicker, to be sure, but what will his brain be at? There's the rub! His brain will begin to go fast, too, and already it's going the pace. 'Tis soothin' and calmin' you want; allayin' the irritability of an irascible, fretful nature, always on the watch for self-torment. Say-bathin', early hours, a quiet mopin' kind of life, that would, maybe, tend to torpor and sleepiness—their's the first things you need; and for exercise, a little work in the garden that you'd take interest in."

"And no physic?" asked Sir Horace.

"Sorra screed! not as much as a powder or a draught, barrin'," said he, suddenly catching the altered expression of the sick man's face, "a little mixture of hyoscyamus I'll compound for you myself. This, and friction over the region of the heart, with a mild embrocation, is all my treatment!"

"And you have hopes of my recovery?" asked Sir Horace, faintly.

"My name isn't Billy Traynor, if I'd not send you out of this, hale and hearty before two months. I read you like a printed book."

"You really give me great confidence, for I perceive you understand the tone of my temperament. Let us try this same embrocation at once; I'll most implicitly obey you in everything."

"My head on a block, then, but I'll cure you," said Billy; who determined that no scruples on his side should mar the trust reposed in him by the patient. "But you must give yourself entirely up to me, not only as to your eatin' and drinkin', but your hours of recreation and study, exercise, amusement, and all, must be at my biddin'. It is the principle of harmony between the moral and physical nature constitutes the whole secret of my system. To be stimulatn' the nerves, and lavin' the arteries dormant, is like playing a jig to minuet time—all must move in simultaneous action, and the cerebellum, the great fly-wheel of the whole, must be made to keep orderly time, d'ye mind."

"I follow you with great interest," said Sir

Horace, to whose subtle nature there was an intense pleasure in the thought of having discovered what he deemed a man of original genius under this unpromising exterior—"There is but one bar to these arrangements—I must leave this at once; I ought to go to-day. I must be off to-morrow."

"Then I'll not take the helm when I can't pilot you through the shoals," said Billy. "To begin my system, and see you go away before I developed my grand invigoratin' arcanum, would be only to destroy your confidence in an elegant discovery."

"Were I only as certain as you seem to be—" began Sir Horace, and then stopped.

"You'd stay and be cured, you were goin' to say. Well, if you didn't feel that same trust in me, you'd be right to go; for it is that very confidence that turns the balance. Ould Babbington used to say that between a good physician and a bad one there was just the difference between a pound and a guinea. But between the one you trust and the one you don't, there's a whole wide ocean."

"On that score every advantage is with you," said Upton, with all the winning grace of his incomparable manner; "and I must now bethink me how I can manage to prolong my stay here." And with this he fell into a musing fit, letting drop occasionally some stray word or two, to mark the current of his thoughts—"The Duke of Headwater's on the thirteenth—Ardroath Castle the Tuesday after—Morehampton for the Derby day. These easily disposed of. Prince Boratinsky, about that Warsaw affair, must be attended to; a letter, yes, a letter, will keep that question open. Lady Grencliffe is a difficulty; of I plead illness, she'll say I'm not strong enough to go to Russia. I'll think it over." And with this he rested his head on his hands, and sank into profound reflection. "Yes, doctor," said he, at length, as though summing up his secret calculations, "health is the first requisite. If you can but restore me, you will be—I am above the mere personal consideration—you will be the means of conferring an important service on the King's Government. A variety of questions, some of them deep and intricate, are now pending, of which I alone understand the secret meaning. A new hand would infallibly spoil the game; and yet, in my present condition, how could I bear the fatigues of long interviews, ministerial deliberations, incessant note-writing, and evasive conversations?"

"Utterly impossible!" exclaimed the doctor.

"As you observe, it is utterly impossible," rejoined Sir Horace, with one of his own dubious smiles; and then, in a manner more natural, resumed—"We public men have the sad necessity of concealing the sufferings on which others trade for sympathy. We must

never confess to an ache or a pain, lest it be rumored that we are unequal to the fatigues of office; and so is it that we are condemned to run the race with broken health and shattered frame, alleging all the while that no exertion is too much, no effort too great for us."

"And may be, after all, it's that very struggle that makes you more than common men," said Billy. "There's a kind of irritability that keeps the brain at stretch, and renders it equal to higher efforts than ever accompanies good every-day health. Dyspepsia is the soul of a prose-writer, and a slight ossification of the aortic valves is a great help to the imagination."

"Do you really say so?" asked Sir Horace, with all the implicit confidence with which he accepted any marvel that had its origin in medicine.

"Don't you feel it yourself, sir?" asked Billy. "Do you ever pen a reply to a knotty state-paper as nately as when you've the heart-burn?—are you ever as epigrammatic as when you're driven to a listen slipper?—and when do you give a minister a jobation as purlily as when you are laborin' under a slight indigestion? Not that it would serve a man to be permanently in gout or the cholice; but for a spurt like a cavalry charge, there's nothing like eatin' something that disagrees with you."

"An ingenious notion," said the diplomatist, smiling.

"And now I'll take my lave," said Billy, rising. "I'm going out to gather some mountain-colechicum and sorrel, to make a diaphoretic infusion; and I've to give Master Charles his Greek lesson; and blister the colt—he's thrown out a bone spavin; and, after that, Handy Carr's daughter has the shakin' ague, and the smith at the forge is to be bled—all before two o'clock, when 'the lord' sends for me; but the rest of the day, and the night, too, I'm your honor's obaydient."

And with a low bow, repeated in a more reverential manner at the door, Billy took his leave and retired.

#### CHAPTER X.

##### A DISCLOSURE.

"HAVE you seen Upton?" asked Glencore eagerly, of Harcourt, as he entered his bedroom.

"Yes; he vouchsafed me an audience during his toilet, just as the old kings of France were accustomed to honor a favorite with one."

"And is he full of miseries at the dreary place, the rough fare, and deplorable resources of this wild spot?"

"Quite the reverse; he is charmed with everything and everybody. The view from his window is glorious; the air has already

invigorated him. For years he has not breakfasted with the same appetite; and he finds, that of all the places he has ever chanced upon, this is the one veritable exact spot which suits him."

"This is very kind on his part," said Glencore, with a faint smile. "Will the humor last, Harcourt? That is the question."

"I trust it will; at least it may well endure for the short period he means to stay; although already he has extended that, and intends remaining till next week."

"Better still," said Glencore, with more animation of voice and manner. "I was already growing nervous about the brief space in which I was to crowd in all that I want to say to him; but if he will consent to wait a day or two, I hope I shall be equal to it."

"In his present mood there is no impatience to be off; on the contrary he has been inquiring as to all the available means of locomotion, and by what convenience he is to make various sea and land excursions."

"We have no carriage—we have no roads, even," said Glencore, peevishly.

"He knows all that; but he is concerting measures about a certain turf-kish, I think they call it, which, by the aid of pillows to lie on, and donkeys to drag, can be made a most useful vehicle; while for longer excursions he has suggested a convenience of wheels and axles to the punt, rendering it equally eligible on land or water. Then he has been designing great improvements in horticulture, and given orders about a rake, a spade, and a hoe for himself. I'm quite serious," said Harcourt, as Glencore smiled with a kind of droll incredulity. "It is perfectly true; and as he hears that the messenger occasionally crosses the Lough to the Post—when there are no letters there, he hints at a little simple telegraph for Leenane, which should announce what the mail contains, and which might be made useful to convey other intelligence. In fact, all my changes here will be as nothing to his reforms, and between us you'll not know your own house again, if you even be able to live in it."

"You have already done much to make it more habitable, Harcourt," said Glencore, feelingly; "and if I have not the grace to thank you for it, I'm not the less grateful. To say truth, my old friend, I half doubted whether it was an act of friendship to attach me ever so lightly to a life of which I am well weary. Ceasing as I have done for years back to feel interest in anything, I dread whatever may again recall me to the world of hopes and fears—that agitated sea of passion, whereon I have no longer vigor to contend. To speak to me then of plans to carry out, schemes to accomplish, was to point to a future of activity and exertion; and I"—here he dropped his



voice to a deep and mournful tone—"can have but one future!—the dark and dreary one before the grave."

Harcourt was too deeply impressed by the solemnity of these words to venture on a reply, and he sat silently contemplating the sorrow-struck, but placid features of the sick man.

"There is nothing to prevent a man struggling, and successfully, too, against mere adverse fortune," continued Glencore. "I feel at times that if I had been suddenly reduced to actual beggary—left without a shilling in the world—that there are many ways in which I could eke out subsistence. A great defeat to my personal ambition I could resist. The casualty that should exclude me from a proud position and public life, I could bear up against with patience, and I hope with dignity. Loss of fortune—loss of influence—loss of station—loss of health, even dearer than them all, can be borne. There is but one intolerable ill—one that no time alleviates, no casuistry diminishes—loss of honor! Ay, Harcourt, rank and riches do little for him who feels himself the inferior of the meanest that elbows him in a crowd; and the man whose name is a scoff and a gibe has but one part to fill—to make himself forgotten."

"I hope I'm not deficient in a sense of personal honor, Glencore," said Harcourt; "but I must say, that I think your reasoning on this point is untenable and wrong."

"Let us not speak more of it," said Glencore, faintly. "I know not how I have been led to allude to what it is better to bear in secret, than confide even to friendship;" and he pressed the strong fingers of the other, as he spoke, in his own feeble grasp. "Leave me now, Harcourt, and send Upton here. It may be that the time is come when I shall be able to speak to him."

"You are too weak to-day, Glencore—too much agitated. Pray defer this interview."

"No, Harcourt, these are my moments of strength. The little energy now left to me is the fruit of strong excitement. Heaven knows how I shall be to-morrow."

Harcourt made no further opposition, but left the room in search of Upton.

It was full an hour later when Sir Horace Upton made his appearance in Glencore's chamber, attired in a purple dressing-gown, profusely braided with gold, loose trousers as richly brocaded, and a pair of real Turkish slippers, resplendent with costly embroidery; a small fez of blue velvet, with a deep gold tassel, covered the top of his head, at either side of which his soft silky hair descended in long massy waves, apparently negligently, but in reality arranged with all the artistic regard to effect of a consummate master. From the gold girdle at his waist depended a

watch, a bunch of keys, a Turkish purse, an embroidered tobacco-bag, a gorgeously chased smelling-bottle, and a small stiletto, with an opal handle. In one hand he carried a meerschau, the other leaned upon a cane and with all the dependence of one who could not walk without its aid. The greeting was cordial and affectionate on both sides; and when Sir Horace after a variety of preparations to ensure his comfort, at length seated himself beside the bed, his features beamed with all their wonted gentleness and kindness.

"I'm charmed at what Harcourt has been telling me, Upton," said Glencore; "and that you really can exist in all the savagery of this wild spot."

"I'm in ecstasy with the place, Glencore. My memory cannot recall the same sensations of health and vigor I have experienced since I came here. Your cook is first-rate; your fare is exquisite; the quiet is a positive blessing; and that queer creature, your doctor, is a very remarkable genius."

"So he is," said Glencore, gravely.

"One of those men of original mould, who leave cultivation leagues behind, and arrive at truth by a bound.

"He certainly treated me with considerable skill."

"I'm satisfied of it; his conversation is replete with shrewd and intelligent observation; and he seems to have studied his art more like a philosopher than a mere physician of the schools; and depend upon it, Glencore, the curative art must mainly depend upon the secret instinct which divines the malady, less by the rigid rules of acquired skill than by that prerogative of genius, which, however exerted, arrives at its goal at once. Our conversation had scarcely lasted a quarter of an hour when he revealed to me the exact seat of a my sufferings, and the most perfect picture of my temperament. And then his suggestion as to treatment were all so reasonable—so we argued."

"A clever fellow—no doubt of it," said Glencore.

"But he is far more than that, Glencore. Cleverness is only a manufacturing quality—that man supplies the raw article also. It has often struck me as very singular that such heads are not found in *our* class—they belong to another order altogether. It is possible that the stimulus of necessity engenders the greatest of all efforts, calling to the operations of the mind the continued strain for contrivance; and thus do we find the most remarkable men are those, every step of whose knowledge has been gained with a struggle."

"I suspect you are right," said Glencore; "and that our old system of school education, wherein all was rough, rugged, and difficult, turned out better men than the present day

habit of everything-made-easy and every-body-made-anything. Flippancy is the characteristic of our age, and we owe it to our schools."

"By the way, what do you mean to do with Charley?" said Upton. "Do you intend him for Eton?"

"I scarcely know—I make plans only to abandon them," said Glencore, gloomily.

"I'm greatly struck with him. He is one of those fellows, however, who require the nicest management, and who either rise superior to all around them, or drop down into an indolent, dreamy existence, conscious of power, but too bashful or too lazy to exert it."

"You have hit him off, Upton, with all your own subtlety; and it was to speak of that boy I have been so eager to see you."

Glencore paused as he said these words, and passed his hand over his brow, as though to prepare himself for the task before him.

"Upton," said he, at last, in a voice of deep and solemn meaning, "the resolution I am about to impart to you is not unlikely to meet your strenuous opposition; you will be disposed to show me strong reasons against it on every ground; you may refuse me that amount of assistance I shall ask of you to carry out my purpose; but if your arguments were all unanswerable, and if your denial to aid me was to sever the old friendship between us, I'd still persist in my determination. For more than two years the project has been before my mind. The long hours of the day, the longer ones of the night, have found me deep in the consideration of it. I have repeated over to myself everything that my ingenuity could suggest against it—I have said to my own heart all that my worst enemy could utter, were he to read the scheme and detect my plan—I have done more, I have struggled with myself to abandon it; but all in vain. My heart is linked to it; it forms the one sole tie that attaches me to life. Without it, the apathy that I feel stealing over me would be complete, and my existence become a mournful dream. In a word, Upton, all is passionless within me, save one sentiment; and I drag on life merely for a *vendetta*."

Upton shook his head mournfully, as the other paused here, and said—

"This is disease, Glencore!"

"Be it so; the malady is beyond cure," said he, sternly.

"Trust me it is not so," said Upton, gently; "you listened to my persuasions on a more—"

"Ay, that I did!" replied Glencore, interrupting, "and have I ever ceased to rue the day I did so! But for *your* arguments, and I had not lived this life of bitter, self-reproaching misery; but for you, and my vengeance had been sated ere this!"

"Remember, Glencore," said the other, "that you had obtained all the world has decreed as satisfaction. He met you and received your fire; you shot him through the chest; not mortally, it is true, but to carry to his grave a painful, lingering disease. To have insisted on his again meeting you would have been little less than murder. No man could have stood your friend in such a quarrel. I told you so then, I repeat it now, *he* could not fire at you; what then was it possible for you to do?"

"Shoot him—shoot him like a dog!" cried Glencore, while his eyes gleamed like the glittering eyes of an enraged beast. "You talk of his lingering life of pain; think of *mine*; have some sympathy for what *I* suffer! Would all the agony of *his* whole existence equal one hour of the torment he has bequeathed to me, its shame and ignominy?"

"These are things which passion never treat of, my dear Glencore."

"Passion alone can feel them," said the other sternly. "Keep subtleties for those who use like weapons. As for me, no casuistry is needed to tell me I am dishonored, and just as little to tell me I must be avenged! If *you* think differently, it were better not to discuss this question further between us; but I did think I could have reckoned upon you, for I felt you had barred my first chance of a vengeance."

"Now, then, for your plan, Glencore," said Upton, who with all the dexterity of his calling preferred opening a new channel in the discussion, to aggravating difficulties by a further opposition.

"I must rid myself of her! There's my plan," cried Glencore, savagely. "You have it all in that resolution. Of no avail is it that I have separated my fortune from hers so long as she bears my name, and renders it infamous in every city in Europe? Is it to you who live in the world, who mix with men of every country, that I need tell this? If a man cannot throw off such a shame he must sink under it."

"But you told me you had an unconquerable aversion to the notion of seeking a divorce?"

"So I had—so I have! The indelicate, the ignominious course of a trial at law, with all its shocking exposure, would be worse than a thousand deaths! To survive the suffering of all the licensed ribaldry of some gowned coward, aspersing one's honor, calumniating, inventing, and when invention failed, suggesting motives, the very thought of which in secret had driven a man to madness! to endure this—to read it—to know it went published over the wide globe, till one's shame became the gossip of millions—and then, with a verdict extorted from pity, damages awarded to re-



pair a broken heart and a sullied name, to carry this disgrace before one's equals, to be again discussed, sifted, and cavilled at! No, Upton; this poor, shattered brain would give way under such a trial. To compass it in mere fancy is already nigh to madness! It must be by other means than these that I attain my object!"

The terrible energy with which he spoke actually frightened Upton, who fancied that his reason had already begun to show signs of decline.

"The world has decreed," resumed Glencore, "that in these conflicts all the shame shall be the husband's, but it shall not be so here!—*she* shall have her share, ay, and by heaven! not the smaller share either!"

"Why, what would you do?" asked Upton, eagerly.

"Deny my marriage! call her my mistress!" cried Glencore, in a voice shaken with passion and excitement.

"But your boy—your son, Glencore?"

"He shall be a bastard! You may hold up your hands in horror, and look with all your best got-up disgust at such a scheme; but if you wish to see me swear to accomplish it, I'll do so now before you, ay, on my knees before you! When we eloped from her father's house at Castellamare we were married by a priest at Capri—of the marriage no trace exists. The more legal ceremony was performed before you, as *Charge d'Affaires* at Naples—of that I have the registry here; nor, except my courier Sanson, is there a living witness. If you determine to assert it, you will do so without a fragment of proof since every document that could substantiate it is in my keeping. You shall see them for yourself. She is, therefore, in my power; and will any man dare to tell me how I should temper that power!"

"But your boy, Glencore, your boy."

"Is my boy's station in the world a prouder one by being the son of the notorious Lady Glencore, or as the offspring of a nameless mistress? What avail to him that he should have a title stained by *her* shame! where is he to go? In what land is he to live, where her infamy has not reached? Is it not a thousand times better that he enter life ignoble and unknown—to start in the world's race with what he may of strength and power—than drag an unhonored existence, shunned by his equals, and only welcome where it is disgrace to find companionship?"

"But you surely have never contemplated all the consequences of this rash resolve. It is the extinction of an ancient title, the alienation of a great estate, when once you have declared your boy illegitimate."

"He is a beggar, I know it; the penalty he must pay is a heavy one; but think of *her*, Upton, think of the haughty viscountess, rev-

elling in splendor, and even in all her shame, the flattered, welcomed guest of that rotten, corrupt society she lives in. Imagine her in all the pride of wealth and beauty, sought after, adulated, worshipped as she is, suddenly struck down by the brand of this disgrace, and left upon the world without fortune, without rank, without even a name. To be shunned like a leper by the very meanest of those it had once been an honor when she recognized them. Picture to yourself this woman degraded to the position of all that is most vile and contemptible. She that scarcely condescended to acknowledge as her equals the best born and the highest, sunk down to the hopeless infamy of a mistress. They tell me she laughed on the day I fainted at seeing her entering the San Carlos at Naples—laughed as they carried me down the steps into the fresh air! Will she laugh now, think you? Shall I be called 'Le Pauvre Sire,' when she hears this? Was there ever a vengeance more terrible, more complete?"

"Again, I say, Glencore, you have no right to involve others in the penalty of her fault. Laying aside every higher motive, you can have no more right to deny your boy's claim to his rank and fortune, than I, or any one else. It cannot be alienated nor extinguished; by his birth he became the heir to your title and estates."

"He has no birth, sir, he is a bastard—who shall deny it? *You* may," added he, after a second's pause, "but where's your proof? Is not every probability as much against you as all documentary evidence, since none will ever believe that I would rob myself of the succession, and make over my fortune to heaven knows what remote relation."

"And do you expect me to become a party to this crime?" asked Upton, gravely.

"You balked me in one attempt at vengeance, and I did think you owed me a reparation!"

"Glencore," said Upton, solemnly, "we are both of us men of the world; men who have seen life in all its varied aspects sufficiently, to know the hollowness of more than half the pretension men trade upon as principle; we have witnessed mean actions and the very lowest motives amongst the highest in station; and it is not for either of us to affect any overstrained estimate of men's honor and good faith; but I say to you, in all sincerity, that not alone do I refuse you all concurrence in the act you meditate, but I hold myself open to denounce and frustrate it."

"You do!" cried Glencore, wildly, while with a bound he sat up in his bed, grasping the curtain convulsively for support.

"Be calm, Glencore, and listen to me patiently."

"You declare that you will use the confi-

dence of this morning against me," cried Glencore, while the lines in his face became indented more deeply, and his bloodless lips quivered with passion. "You take your part with *her*."

"I only ask that you would hear me."

"You owe me four thousand five hundred pounds, Sir Horace Upton," said Glencore, in a voice barely above a whisper, but every accent of which was audible.

"I know it, Glencore," said Upton, calmly. "You helped me by a loan of that sum in a moment of great difficulty. Your generosity went further, for you took, what nobody else would, my personal security."

Glencore made no reply, but throwing back the bedclothes, slowly and painfully arose, and with tottering and uncertain steps, approached a table. With a trembling hand he unlocked a drawer and taking out a paper, opened and scanned it over.

"There's your bond, sir," said he, with a hollow, cavernous voice, as he threw it into the fire, and crushed it down into the flames with the poker. "There is nothing now between us. You are free to do your worst!" And as he spoke, a few drops of dark blood trickled from his nostrils, and he fell senseless upon the floor.



## CHAPTER XI.

## SOME LIGHTS AND SHADOWS OF DIPLOMATIC LIFE.

THERE is a trait in the lives of great diplomatists, of which it is just possible some one or other of my readers may not have heard, which is, that none of them have ever attained to any eminence without an attachment—we can find no better word for it—to some woman of superior understanding, who has united within herself great talents for society, with a high and soaring ambition.

They who only recognize in the world of politics the dry details of ordinary parliamentary business, poor-law questions, sanitary rules, railroad bills, and colonial grants, can form but a scanty notion of the excitement derived from the high interests of party, and the great game played by about twenty mighty gamblers, with the whole world for the table, and kingdoms for counters. In this “grande rôle” women perform no ignoble part; nay, it were not too much to say that theirs is the very motive-power of the whole vast machinery.

Had we any right to step beyond the limits of our story for illustration, it would not be difficult to quote names enough to show that we are speaking not at hazard, but “from book;” and that great events derive far less of their impulse from “the lords” than from “the ladies of creation.” Whatever be the part they take in these contests, their chief attention is ever directed, not to the smaller battle-field of home questions, but to the greater and wider campaign of international politics. Men may wrangle, and hair-split, and divide about a harbor bill or a road session; but women occupy themselves in devising how thrones may be shaken and dynasties disturbed—how frontiers may be changed, and nationalities trafficked; for, strange as it may seem, the stupendous incidents which mould human destinies are more under the influence of passion and intrigue, than the commonest events of every-day life.

Our readers may, and not very unreasonably, begin to suspect that it was in some moment of abstraction we wrote “Glencore” at the head of these pages, and that these speculations are but the preface to some very abstruse reflections upon the political condition of Europe. But no: they are simply intended as a prelude to the fact, that Sir Horace Upton was not exempt from the weakness of his order, and that he, too, reposed his trust upon a woman’s judgment.

The name of his illustrious guide was the Princess Sabloukoff, by birth a Pole, but married to a Russian of vast wealth and high family, from whom she separated early in life, to mingle in the world with all the prestige of position, riches, and—greater

than either—extreme beauty, and a manner of such fascination as made her name of European celebrity.

When Sir Horace first met her, he was the junior member of our embassy at Naples, and she the distinguished leader of fashion in that city. We are not about to busy ourselves with the various narratives which professed to explain her influence at Court, or the secret means to which she owed her ascendancy over royal highnesses, and her sway over cardinals. Enough that she possessed such, and that the world knew it. The same success attended her at Vienna and at Paris. She was courted and sought after everywhere; and if her arrival was not fêted with the public demonstrations that await royalty, it was assuredly an event recognized with all that could flatter her vanity, or minister to her self-esteem.

Sir Horace was presented to her as an attaché, when she simply bowed and smiled. He renewed his acquaintance some ten years later as a secretary, when she vouchsafed to say she remembered him. A third time, after a lapse of years, he came before her as a *chargé d'affaires*, when she conversed with him; and lastly, when time had made him a minister, and with less generosity had laid its impress upon herself, she gave him her hand, and said—

“My dear Horace, how charming to see an old friend, if you be good enough to let me call you so.”

And he was so; he accepted the friendship as frankly as it was proffered. He knew that time was, when he could have no pretension to this distinction; but the beautiful Princess was no longer young; the fascinations she had wielded were already a kind of Court tradition; archdukes and ambassadors were no more her slaves; nor was she the terror of jealous queens and Court favorites. Sir Horace knew all this; but he also knew that, she being such, his ambition had never dared to aspire to her friendship, and it was only in her days of declining fortune that he could hope for such distinction.

All this may seem very strange and very odd, dear reader; but we live in very strange and very odd times, and more than one-half the world is only living on “second-hand”—second-hand shawls and second-hand speeches, second-hand books, and court suits and opinions are all rife; and why not second-hand friendships?

Now, the friendship between a by-gone beauty of forty—and we will not say how many more years—and a hacknied, half-disgusted man of the world, of the same age, is a very curious contract. There is no love in it; as little is there any strong tie of esteem; but there is a wonderful bond of

self-interest and mutual convenience. Each seems to have at last found "one that understands him;" similarity of pursuit has engendered similarity of taste. They have each seen the world from exactly the same point of view, and they have come out of it equally heart-weared and tired, stored with vast resources of social knowledge, and with a keen insight into every phase of that complex machinery by which one-half the world cheats the other.

Madame de Sabloukoff was still handsome—she had far more than what is ill-naturedly called the remains of good looks. She had a brilliant complexion, lustrous dark eyes, and a profusion of the most beautiful hair. She was, besides, a most splendid dresser. Her toilet was the very perfection of taste, and if a little inclining to over-magnificence, not the less becoming to one whose whole air and bearing assumed something of queenly dignity.

In the world of society there is a very great prestige attends those who have at some one time played a great part in life. The deposed king, the ex-minister, the banished general, and even the bygone beauty, receive a species of respectful homage, which the wider world without doors is not always ready to accord them. Good-breeding, in fact, concedes what mere justice might deny; and they who have to fall back upon "souvenirs" for this greatness, always find their advantage in associating with the class whose prerogative is good manners.

The Princess Sabloukoff was not, however, one of those who can live upon the interest of a bygone fame. She saw that, when the time of coquetting and its fascinations has passed, that still, with facilities like hers, there was yet a great game to be played. Hitherto she had only studied characters; now she began to reflect upon events. The transition was an easy one, to which her former knowledge contributed largely its assistance. There was scarcely a viceroy, scarcely a leading personage in Europe, she did not know personally and well. She had lived in intimacy with ministers, and statesmen, and great politicians. She knew them in all that "life of the *salon*," where men alternately expand into frankness, and practise the wily devices of their crafty callings. She had seen them in all the weaknesses, too, of inferior minds, eager after small objects, tormented by insignificant cares. They who habitually dealt with these mighty personages, only beheld them in their dignity of station, or surrounded by the imposing accessories of office. What an advantage, then, to regard them closer and nearer—to be aware of their short-comings, and acquainted with the secret springs of their ambitions!

The Princess and Sir Horace very soon saw that each needed the other. When Robert Macaire accidentally met an accomplished gamester, who tamed the king as often as he did, and could reciprocate every trick and artifice with him, he threw down the cards, saying, "*Embrassons nous, nous sommes freres!*" Now the illustration is a very ignoble one, but it conveys no very inexact idea of the bond which united these two distinguished individuals.

Sir Horace was one of those fine, acute intelligences, which may be gapped and blunted if applied to rough work, but are splendid instruments where you would cut cleanly, and cut deep. She saw this at once. He, too, recognized in her the wonderful knowledge of life, joined to vast powers of employing it with profit. No more was wanting to establish a friendship between them. Dispositions must be, to a certain degree, different between those who are to live together as friends, but tastes must be alike. Theirs were so. They had the same veneration for the same things, the same regard for the same celebrities, and the same contempt for the small successes which were engaging the minds of many around them. If the Princess had a real appreciation of the fine abilities of Sir Horace, he estimated, at their full value, all the resources of her wondrous tact and skill, and the fascinations which even yet surrounded her.

Have we said enough to explain the terms of this alliance? or must we make one more confession, and own that her insidious praise—a flattery too delicate and fine ever to be committed to absolute eulogy—convinced Sir Horace that she alone of all the world was able to comprehend the vast stores of his knowledge, and the wide measure of his capacity as a statesman.

In the great game of statecraft, diplomatists are not above looking into each other's hands; but this must always be accomplished by means of a confederate. How terribly alike are all human rogueries, whether the scene be a conference at Vienna, or the tent of a thimbliger at Ascot! La Sabloukoff was unrivalled in the art. She knew how to push railery and *persiflage* to the very frontiers of truth, and even peep over and see what lay beyond. Sir Horace traded on the material with which she supplied him, and thereby acquired the reputation of being all that was crafty and subtle in diplomacy.

How did Upton know this? Whence came he by that? What mysterious source of information is he possessed of? Who could have revealed such a secret to him? were questions often asked in that dreary old drawing-room of Downing-street, where men's



destinies are shaped, and the fate of millions decided, from four o'clock to six P. M.

Often and often were the measures of the cabinet shaped by the tidings which arrived with all the speed of a foreign courier—over and over again were the speeches in Parliament based upon information received from him. It has even happened that the news from his hand has caused the telegraph of the Admiralty to signalize the Thunderer to put to sea with all haste. In a word, he was the trusted agent of our Government, whether ruled by a Whig or a Tory, and his despatches were ever regarded as a sure warranty for action.

The English Minister at a foreign court labors under one great disadvantage, which is, that his policy, and all the consequences that are to follow it, are rarely, if ever, shaped with any reference to the state of matters then existing in his own country. Absorbed as he is in great European questions, how can he follow, with sufficient attention, the course of events at home, or recognize, in the signs and tokens of the division list, the changeful fortunes of party? He may be advising energy when the cry is all for temporizing; counselling patience and submission, when the nation is eager for a row; recommend religious concessions in the very week that Exeter Hall is denouncing toleration; or actually suggesting aid to a Government that a popular orator has proclaimed to be everything that is unjust and ignominious.

It was Sir Horace Upton's fortune to have fallen into one of these embarrassments. He had advised the Home Government to take some measures, or, at least, look with favor on certain movements of the Poles in Russia, in order the better to obtain some concessions then required from the cabinet of the Czar. The Premier did not approve of the suggestion, nor was it like to meet acceptance at home. We were in a pro-Russian fever at the moment. Some mob disturbances at Norwich, a Chartist meeting at Stockport, and something else in Wales, had frightened the nation into a hot stage of conservatism; and never was there such an ill-chosen moment to succor Poles, or awaken dormant nationalities.

Upton's proposal was rejected. He was even visited with one of those disagreeable acknowledgments by which the Foreign Office reminds a speculative minister, that he is going *ultra crepidam*. When an envoy is snubbed, he always asks for leave of absence. If the castigation be severe, he invariably, on his return to England, goes to visit the leader of the Opposition. This is the ritual. Sir Horace, however, only observed it in half. He came home; but after his first

morning's attendance at the Foreign Office, he disappeared; none saw or heard of him. He knew well all the value of mystery, and he accordingly disappeared from public view altogether.

When, therefore, Harcourt's letter reached him, proposing that he should visit Glencore, the project came most opportunely; and that he only accepted it for a day, was in the spirit of his habitual diplomacy, since he then gave himself all the power of an immediate departure, or permitted the option of remaining gracefully, in defiance of all pre-engagements, and all plans to be elsewhere. We have been driven, for the sake of this small fact, to go a great way round in our history; but we promise our reader that Sir Horace was one of those people whose motives are never tracked without a considerable *detour*. The reader knows now why he was at Glencore—he always knew how. The terrible interview with Glencore brought back a second relapse of greater violence than the first, and it was nigh a fortnight ere he was pronounced out of danger. It was a strange life that Harcourt and Upton led in that dreary interval. Guests of one whose life was in utmost peril, they met in that old gallery each day to talk, in half whispered sentences, over the sick man's case, and his chances of recovery.

Harcourt frankly told Upton that the first relapse was the consequence of a scene between Glencore and himself. Upton made no similar confession. He reflected deeply, however, over all that had passed, and came to the conclusion that, in Glencore's present condition, opposition might prejudice his chance of recovery, but never avail to turn him from his project. He also set himself to study the boy's character, and found it, in all respects, the very type of his father's. Great bashfulness united to great boldness, timidity and distrust, were there side by side with a rash, impetuous nature, that would hesitate at nothing in pursuit of an object. Pride, however, was the great principle of his being—the good and evil motive of all that was in him. He had pride on every subject. His name, his rank, his station, a consciousness of natural quickness, a sense of aptitude to learn whatever came before him—all gave him the same feeling of pride.

"There's a deal of good in that lad," said Harcourt to Upton, one evening, as the boy had left the room; "I like his strong affection for his father, and that unbounded faith he seems to have in Glencore's being better than every one else in the world."

"It is an excellent religion, my dear Harcourt, if it could only last!" said the diplomat, smiling amiably.

"And why shouldn't it last?" asked the other, impatiently.

"Just because nothing lasts that has its origin in ignorance. The boy has seen nothing of life—has had no opportunity for forming a judgment, or instituting a comparison between any two objects." The first shot that breaches that same fortress of belief, down will come the whole edifice!"

"You'd give a lad to the Jesuits, then, to be trained up in every artifice and distrust?"

"Far from it, Harcourt. I think their system a mistake all through. The science of life must be self-learned, and it is a slow acquisition. All that education can do is to prepare the mind to receive it. Now, to employ the first years of a boy's life by storing him with prejudices, is just to encumber a vessel with a rotten cargo, that she must throw overboard before she can load with a profitable freight."

"And is it in that category you'd class his love for his father?" asked the Colonel.

"Of course not; but any unnatural or exaggerated estimate of him is a great error, to lead to an equally unfair depreciation when the time of deception is past. To be plain, Harcourt, is that boy fitted to enter one of our great public schools, stand the hard rough usage of his own equals, and buffet it as you or I have done?"

"Why not? or, at least, why shouldn't he become so after a month or two?"

"Just because in that same month or two he'd either die broken-hearted, or plunge his knife in the heart of some comrade who insulted him."

"Not a bit of it. You don't know him at all. Charley is a fine give-and-take fellow; a little proud, perhaps, because he lives apart from all that are his equals. Let Glencore just take courage to send him to Harrow or Rugby, and my life on it, but he'll be the manliest fellow in the school."

"I'll undertake, without Harrow or Rugby, that the boy should become something even greater than that," said Upton, smiling.

"O, I know you sneer at my ideas of what a young fellow ought to be," said Harcourt; "but somehow you did not neglect these same pursuits yourself. You can shoot as well as most men, and you ride better than any I know of."

"One likes to do a little of everything, Harcourt," said Upton, not at all displeased at this flattery; "and some way it never suits a fellow, who really feels that he has fair abilities, to do anything badly; so that it comes to this, one does it well or not at all. Now you never heard me touch the piano?"

"Never."

"Just because I'm only an inferior performer, and so I only play when perfectly alone."

"Egad, if I could only master a waltz, or one of the melodies, I'd be at it whenever any one would listen to me."

"You're a good soul, and full of amiability, Harcourt," said Upton; but the words sounded very much as though he said, "You're a dear, good, sensible creature, without an atom of self-respect or esteem."

Indeed, so conscious was Harcourt that the expression meant no compliment, that he actually reddened and looked away. At last he took courage to renew the conversation, and said—

"And what would you advise for the boy, then?"

"I'd scarcely lay down a system, but I'll tell you what I would not do. I'd not bore him with mathematics; I'd not put his mind on the stretch in any direction; I'd not stifle the development of any taste that may be struggling within him, but rather encourage and foster it, since it is precisely by such an indication you'll get some clue to his nature. Do you understand me?"

"I'm not quite sure I do; but I believe you'd leave him to something like utter idleness."

"What to *you*, my dear Harcourt, would be utter idleness, I've no doubt, but not to *him*, perhaps."

Again the Colonel looked mortified, but evidently knew not how to resent this new sneer.

"Well," said he, after a pause, "the lad will not require to be a genius."

"So much the better for him, probably; at all events, so much the better for his friends, and all who are to associate with him."

Here he looked fixedly at Upton, who smiled a most courteous acquiescence in the opinion—a politeness that made poor Harcourt perfectly ashamed of his own rudeness, and he continued hurriedly—

"He'll have abundance of money. This life of Glencore's here will be like a long minority to him. A fine old name and title, and the deuce is in it if he can't rub through life pleasantly enough with such odds."

"I believe you are right, after all, Harcourt," said Upton, sighing, and now speaking in a far more natural tone; "it is rubbing through with the best of us, and no more!"

"If you mean that the process is a very irksome one, I enter my dissent at once," broke in Harcourt. "I'm not ashamed to own that I like life prodigiously; and if I be spared to say so, I'm sure I'll have the same



story to tell fifteen or twenty years hence, and yet I'm not a genius!"

"No!" said Upton, smiling a bland assent.

"Nora a philosopher either," said Harcourt, irritated at the acknowledgment.

"Certainly not," chimed in Upton, with another smile.

"Nor have I any wish to be one or the other," rejoined Harcourt, now really provoked. "I know right well that if I were in trouble or difficulty to-morrow—if I wanted a friend to help me with a loan of some thousand pounds—it is not to a genius or a philosopher I'd look for the assistance."

It is ever a chance shot that explodes a magazine, and so is it that a random speech is sure to hit the mark that has escaped all the efforts of skilful direction.

Upton winced and grew pale at these last words, and he fixed his penetrating gray eyes upon the speaker with a keenness all his own. Harcourt, however, bore the look without the slightest touch of uneasiness. The honest Colonel had spoken without any hidden meaning, nor had he the slightest intention of a personal application in his words. Of this fact Upton appeared soon to be convinced, for his features gradually recovered their wonted calmness.

"How perfectly right you are, my dear Harcourt," said he, mildly. "The man who expects to be happier by the possession of genius, is like one who would like to warm himself through a burning-glass."

"Egad, that is a great consolation for us slow fellows," said Harcourt, laughing; "and now what say you to a game at *ecarté*, for I believe it is just the one solitary thing I am more than your match in?"

"I accept inferiority in a great many others," said Upton, blandly; "but I must decline the challenge, for I have a letter to write, and our post here starts at daybreak."

"Well, I'd rather carry the whole bag than indite one of its contents," said the Colonel, rising, and, with a hearty shake of the hand, he left the room.

A letter was fortunately not so great an infliction to Upton, who opened his desk at once, and with a rapid hand traced the following lines:

"MY DEAR PRINCESS. — My last will have told you how and why I came here; I wish I but knew in what way to explain why I still remain! Imagine the dreariest desolation of Calabria in a climate of fog and sea-drift — sunless skies, leafless trees, impassable roads — the outdoor comforts; the joys within, depending on a gloomy old house, with a few gloomier inmates, and a host on a sick bed. Yet with all this I believe I am better; the doctor, a strange unsophisticated crea-

ture, a cross between Galen and Caliban, seems to have hit off what the great dons of science never could detect — the true seat of my malady. He says — and he really reasons out his case ingeniously — that the brain has been working for the inferior nerves, not limiting itself to cerebral functions, but actually performing the humbler office of muscular direction, and so forth; in fact, a field-marshal doing duty for a common soldier! I almost fancy I can corroborate his view, from internal sensations; I have a kind of secret instinct that he is right. Poor brain, why it should do the work of another department, with abundance of occupation of its own, I cannot make out. But, to turn to something else. This is not a bad refuge just now. They cannot make out where I am, and all the inquiries at my club are answered by a vague impression that I have gone back to Germany, which the people at F. O. are aware is not the case. I have already told you that my suggestion has been negatived in the Cabinet; it was ill-timed, Allington says, but I ventured to remind his lordship that a policy requiring years to develop, and more years still to push to profitable conclusion, is not to be reduced to the category of mere *apropos* measures. He was vexed, and replied weakly and angrily — I rejoined, and left him. Next day he sent for me, but my reply was, 'I was leaving town' — and I left. I don't want the Bath, because it would be 'ill-timed;' so they must give me Vienna, or be satisfied to see me in the House and the Opposition!

"Your tidings of Brekenoff came exactly in the nick. Allington said pompously that they were sure of him; so I just said, Ask him if they would like our sending a Consular Agent to Cracow? It seems he was so flurried by a fancied detection, that he made a full acknowledgment of all. But even at this Allington takes no alarm. The malady of the Treasury benches is deafness, with a touch of blindness. What a cumbrous piece of bungling machinery is this boasted representative government of ours! No promptitude — no secrecy! Everything debated, and discussed, and discouraged, before begun; every blot-hit for an antagonist to profit by! Even the characters of our public men exposed, and their weaknesses displayed to view, so that every state of Europe may see where to wound us, and through whom! There is no use in the Countess remaining here any longer; the King never noticed her at the last ball; she is angry at it, and if she shows her irritation she'll spoil all. I always thought Josephine would fail in England. It is, indeed, a widely different thing to succeed in the small Courts of Germany and our great whirlpool of St. James. You

could do it, my dear friend; but where is the other dare attempt it?

"Until I hear from you again I can come to no resolution. One thing is clear, they do not, or they will not, see the danger I have pointed out to them. All the home policy of our country is drifting, day by day, towards a democracy—how in the name of common sense then is our foreign policy to be maintained at the standard of the holy alliance? What an absurd juxtaposition is there between popular rights and an alliance with the Czar! This peril will overtake them one day or another, and then, to escape from national indignation, the minister, whoever he may be, will be driven to make war. But I can't wait for this; and yet were I to resign, my resignation would not embarrass them—it would irritate and annoy, but not disconcert. Brekenoff will surely go home on leave. You ought to meet him; he is certain to be at Ems. It is the refuge of disgraced diplomacy. Try if something cannot be done with him. He used to say formerly yours were the only dinners now in Europe. He hates Allington. This feeling, and his love for white truffles, are I believe the only clues to the man. Be sure, however, that the truffles are Piedmontese; they have a slight flavor of garlic, rather agreeable than otherwise. Like Josephine's lisp, it is a defect that serves for a distinction. The article in the *Beaux Mondes* was clever, prettily written, and even well worked out; but state affairs are never really well treated save by those who conduct them. One must have played the game himself to understand all the nice subtleties of the contest. These your mere reviewer or newspaper scribe never attains to; and then he has no reserves—none of those mysterious concealments, that are to negotiations like the eloquent pauses of conversation—the moment when dialogue ceases and real interchange of ideas begins.

"The fine touch, the keen 'apercu,' belongs alone to those who have had to exercise these same qualities in the treatment of great questions; and hence it is, that though the public be often much struck, and even enlightened, by the powerful 'article' or the able 'leader,' the statesman is rarely taught anything by the journalist, save the force and direction of public opinion.

"I had a deal to say to you about poor Glencore, whom you tell me you remember; but how to say it. He is broken-hearted—literally broken-hearted—by her desertion of him. It was one of those ill-assorted leagues which cannot hold together. Why they did not see this, and make the best of it—sensibly, dispassionately, even amicably—it is difficult to say. An Englishman, it

would seem, must always hate his wife if she cannot love him; and after all, how involuntary are all affections, and what a severe penalty is this for an unwitting offence.

"He ponders over this calamity, just as if it were the crushing stroke by which a man's whole career was to be finished forever. The stupidity of all stupidities is in these cases to fly from the world, and avoid society. By doing this a man rears a barrier he never can repass; he proclaims aloud his sentiment of the injury, quite forgetting all the offence he is giving to the hundred-and-fifty others, who, in the same predicament as himself, are by no means disposed to turn hermits on account of it. Men make revolutionary governments, smash dynasties, transgress laws, but they cannot oppose *convenances*!

"I need scarcely say that there is nothing to be gained by reasoning with him. He has worked himself up to a chronic fury, and talks of vengeance all day long like a Corsican. For company here I have an old brother-officer of my days of tinsel and pipe-clay—an excellent creature whom I amuse myself by tormenting. There is also Glencore's boy—a strange, dreary kind of haughty fellow, an exaggeration of his father in disposition, but with good abilities. These are not the elements of much social agreeability, but you know, dear friend, how little I stand in need of what is called company. Your last letter, charming as it was, has afforded me all the companionship I could desire. I have re-read it till I know it by heart. I could almost chide you for that delightful little party in my absence, but of course it was, as all you ever do is, perfectly right; and after all I am, perhaps, not sorry that you had those people when I was away, so that we shall be more *chez soi* when we meet. But when is that to be? Who can tell? My medico insists upon five full weeks for my cure. Allington is very likely in his present temper to order me back to my post. You seem to think that you must be in Berlin when Seckendorf arrives, so that ———. But I will not darken the future by gloomy forebodings. I *could* leave this, that is, if any urgency required it, at once, but if possible it is better I should remain, at least a little longer. My last meeting with Glencore was unpleasant. Poor fellow, his temper is not what it used to be, and he is forgetful of what is due to one whose nerves are in the sad state of mine. You shall hear all my complainings when we meet, dear princess, and with this I *kiss* your hand, begging you to accept all '*mes hommages*' et *mes regards*.

"H. U.

"Your letter must be addressed 'Leenane, Ireland.' Your last had only 'Glencore'



said Peter, mournfully, as, steadying himself by the mast, he cast a look seaward.

"Row on—let us get beside her," said Harcourt.

"She's the yawl! — I know her now," cried the man.

"And empty?"

"Washed out of her with a say, belike," said Peter, resuming his oar, and tugging with all his strength.

A quarter of an hour's hard rowing brought them close to the dismasted boat, which, drifting broadside on the sea, seemed at every instant ready to capsize.

"There's something in the bottom in the stern-sheets!" screamed Peter. "It's himself! — O blessed Virgin, it's himself!" And, with a bound, he sprung from his own boat into the other.

The next instant he had lifted the helpless body of the boy from the bottom of the boat, and, with a shout of joy, screamed out —

"He's alive! — he's well! — it's only fatigue!"

Harcourt pressed his hands to his face, and sank upon his knees in prayer.

## CHAPTER XIII.

## A "VOW" ACCOMPLISHED.

Just as Upton had seated himself at that frugal meal of weak tea and dry toast he called his breakfast, Harcourt suddenly entered the room, splashed and road-stained from head to foot, and in his whole demeanor indicating the work of a fatiguing journey.

"Why, I thought to have had my breakfast with you," cried he, impatiently, "and this is like the diet of a convalescent from fever. Where is the salmon—where the grouse pie—where are the cutlets—and the chocolate—and the poached eggs—and the hot rolls, and the cherry bounce?"

"Say, rather, where are the disordered livers, worn-out stomachs, fevered brains, and impatient tempers, my worthy Colonel?" said Upton, blandly. "Talleyrand himself once told me that he always treated great questions starving."

"And he made a nice mess of the world in consequence," blustered out Harcourt. "A fellow with an honest appetite, and a sound digestion, would never have played false to so many masters."

"It is quite right that men like you should read history in this wise," said Upton, smiling, as he dipped a crust in his tea, and ate it.

"Men like me are very inferior creatures, no doubt," broke in Harcourt, angrily; "but I very much doubt if men like you had come eighteen miles on foot over a mountain this morning, after a night passed in an open boat at sea—ay, in a gale, by Jove, such as I sha'n't forget in a hurry."

"You have hit it perfectly, Harcourt, *sum cuique*; and if only we could get the world to see that each of us has his speciality, we should all of us do much better."

By the vigorous tug he gave the bell, and the tone in which he ordered up something to eat, it was plain to see that he scarcely relished the moral Upton had applied to his speech. With the appearance of the good cheer, however, he speedily threw off his momentary displeasure, and, as he ate and drank, his honest, manly face lost every trace of annoyance. Once only did a passing shade of anger cross his countenance. It was when, suddenly looking up, he saw Upton's eyes settled on his, and his whole features expressing a most palpable sensation of wonderment and compassion.

"Ay," cried he, "I know well what's passing in your mind this minute. You are lost in your pitying estimate of such a mere animal as I am; but, hang it all, old fellow, why not be satisfied with the flattering

thought that you are of another stamp—a creature of a different order?"

"It does not make one a whit happier," sighed Upton, who never shrunk from accepting the sentiment as his own.

"I should have thought otherwise," said Harcourt, with a malicious twinkle of the eye, for he fancied that he had at last touched the weak point of his adversary.

"No, my dear Harcourt, though *crasse natura* have rather the best of it, since no small share of this world's collisions are actually physical shocks; and that great, strong pipkin that encloses your brains, will stand much that would smash this poor egg-shell that shrouds mine."

"Whenever you draw a comparison in my favor, I always find at the end I come off worst," said Harcourt, bluntly; and Upton laughed, one of his rich musical laughs, in which there was indeed nothing mirthful, but something that seemed to say that his nature experienced a sense of enjoyment higher, perhaps, than anything merely comic could suggest.

"You came off best this time, Harcourt," said he, good humoredly; and such a thorough air of frankness accompanied the words that Harcourt was disarmed of all distrust at once, and joined in the laugh heartily.

"But you have not yet told me, Harcourt," said the other, "where you have been, and why you spent your night on the sea."

"The story is not a very long one," replied he; and at once gave a full recital of the events, which our reader has already had before him in our last chapter, adding, in conclusion, "I have left the boy in a cabin at Belmullet; he is in a high fever, and raving so loud that you could hear him a hundred yards away. I told him to keep cold water on his head, and gave him plenty of it to drink—nothing more—till I could fetch our doctor over, for it will be impossible to move the boy from where he is for the present."

"Glencore has been asking for him already this morning. He did not desire to see him, but he begged of me to go to him and speak with him."

"And have you told him that he was from home—that he passed the night away from this?"

"No; I merely intimated that I should look after him, waiting for your return to guide myself afterwards."

"I don't suspect that when we took him from the boat the malady had set in; he appeared rather like one overcome by cold and exhaustion. It was about two hours after—he had taken some food, and seemed stronger—when I said to him, 'Come,



Charley, you'll soon be all right again; I have sent a fellow to look after a pony for you, and you'll be able to ride back, won't you?"

"Ride where?" cried he, eagerly.

"Home, of course," said I, "to Glencore."

"Home! I have no home," cried he; and the wild scream he uttered the words with I'll never forget. It was just as if that one thought was the boundary between sense and reason, and the instant he had passed it, all was chaos and confusion, for now his raving began—the most frantic imaginations—always images of sorrow pictured, and a rapidity of utterance there was no following. Of course in such cases the delusions suggest no clue to the cause, but all his fancies were about being driven out of doors an outcast and a beggar, and of his father rising from his sick bed to curse him. Poor boy! Even in this his better nature gleamed forth as he cried, 'Tell him'—and he said the words in a low whisper—"tell him not to anger himself; he is ill, very ill, and should be kept tranquil. Tell him, then, that I am going—going away, forever, and he'll hear of me no more." As Harcourt repeated the words his own voice faltered, and two heavy drops slowly coursed down his bronzed cheeks. "You see," added he, as if to excuse the emotion, "that wasn't like raving, for he spoke this just as he might have done if his very heart was breaking."

"Poor fellow!" said Upton; and the words were uttered with real feeling.

"Some terrible scene must have occurred between them," resumed Harcourt; "of that I feel quite certain."

"I suspect you are right," said Upton, bending over his teacup; "and our part, in consequence, is one of considerable delicacy; for, until Glencore alludes to what has passed, *we*, of course, can take no notice of it. The boy is ill; he is in a fever; we know nothing more."

"I'll leave you to deal with the father; the son shall be my care. I've told Traynor to be ready to start with me after breakfast, and have ordered two stout ponies for the journey. I conclude there will be no objection in detaining the doctor for the night; what think you, Upton?"

"Do *you* consult the doctor on that head; meanwhile, I'll pay a visit to Glencore. I'll meet you in the library." And so saying Upton rose, and gracefully draping the folds of his embroidered dressing-gown, and arranging the waving lock of hair which had escaped beneath his cap, he slowly set out towards the sick man's chamber.

Of all the springs of human action, there was not one in which Sir Horace Upton sym-

pathized so little as passion. That any man could adopt a line of conduct from which no other profit could result than what might minister to a feeling of hatred, jealousy, or revenge, seemed to him utterly contemptible. It was not, indeed, the morality of such a course that he called in question, although he would not have contested that point. It was its meanness, its folly, its insufficiency. His experience of great affairs had imbued him with all the importance that was due to temper and moderation. He scarcely remembered an instance where a false move had damaged a negotiation, that it could not be traced to some passing trait of impatience, or some lurking spirit of animosity biding the hour of its gratification.

He had long learned to perceive how much more temperament has to do, in the management of great events, than talent or capacity, and his opinion of men was chiefly founded on this quality of his nature. It was, then, with an almost pitying estimate of Glencore, that he now entered the room where the sick man lay.

Anxious to be alone with him, Glencore had dismissed all the attendants from his room, and sat, propped up by pillows, anxiously awaiting his approach.

Upton moved through the dimly-lighted room like one familiar to the atmosphere of illness, and took his seat beside the bed with that noiseless quiet which in *him* was a kind of instinct.

It was several minutes before Glencore spoke, and then, in a low, faint voice, he said, "Are we alone, Upton?"

"Yes," said the other, gently pressing the wasted fingers which lay on the counterpane before him.

"You forgive me, Upton," said he, and the words trembled as he uttered them; "you forgive me, Upton, though I cannot forgive myself."

"My dear friend, a passing moment of impatience is not to break the friendship of a lifetime. Your calmer judgment would, I know, not be unjust to me."

"But how am I to repair the wrong I have done you?"

"By never alluding to it—never thinking of it again, Glencore."

"It was so unworthy—so ignoble in me!" cried Glencore, bitterly, and a tear fell over his eyelid and rested on his wan and worn cheek.

"Let us never think of it, my dear Glencore. Life has real troubles enough for either of us, not to dwell on those which we may fashion out of our emotions, I promise you. I have forgotten the whole incident."

Glencore sighed heavily, but did not speak; at last he said, "Be it so, Upton," and, cov-

ering his face with his hand, lay still and silent. "Well," said he, after a long pause, "the die is cast, Upton—I have told him!"

"Told the boy?" said Upton.

He nodded an assent. "It is too late to oppose me now, Upton—the thing is done. I didn't think I had strength for it, but revenge is a strong stimulant, and I felt as though once more restored to health as I proceeded. Poor fellow, he bore it like a man. Like a man do I say? No, but better than ever man bore such crushing tidings. He asked me to stop once, while his head reeled, and said, 'In a minute I shall be myself again;' and so he was too; you should have seen him, Upton, as he rose to leave me. So much of dignity was there in his look, that my heart misgave me; and I told him that still, as my son, he should never want a friend and a protector. He grew deadly pale, and caught at the bed for support. Another moment, and I'd not answer for myself. I was already relenting—but I thought of *her*, and my resolution came back in all its force. Still I dared not look on him. The sight of that warm cheek, those quivering lips and glassy eyes, would have certainly unmanned me. I turned away. When I looked round he was gone." As he ceased to speak, a clammy perspiration burst forth over his face and forehead, and he made a sign to Upton to wet his lips.

"It is the last pang she is to cost me, Upton, but it is a sore one!" said he, in a low, hoarse whisper.

"My dear Glencore, this is all little short of madness; even as revenge it is a failure, since the heaviest share of the penalty recoils upon yourself."

"How so?" cried he, impetuously.

"Is it thus that an ancient name is to go out forever? Is it in this wise that a house noble for centuries is to crumble into ruin? I will not again urge upon you the cruel wrong you are doing. Over that boy's inheritance you have no more right than over mine—you cannot rob him of the protection of the law. No power could ever give you the disposal of his destiny in this wise."

"I have done it, and I will maintain it, sir," cried Glencore; "and if the question is, as you vaguely hint to be, one of law"—

"No, no, Glencore, do not mistake me."

"Hear me out, sir," said he, passionately. "If it is to be one of law, let Sir Horace Upton give his testimony—tell all that he knows—and let us see what it will avail him. You may—it is quite open to you—place us front to front as enemies. You may teach the boy to regard me as one who has robbed him of his birthright, and train him up to become my accuser in a court of justice. But my cause is a strong one; it can-

not be shaken; and, where you hope to brand me with tyranny, you will but visit bastardy upon him. Think twice, then, before you declare this combat. It is one where all your craft will not sustain you."

"My dear Glencore, it is not in this spirit that we can speak profitably to each other. If you will not hear my reasons calmly and dispassionately, to what end am I here? You have long known me as one who lays claim to no more rigid morality than consists with the theory of a worldly man's experiences. I affect no high-flown sentiments. I am as plain and practical as may be; and when I tell you that you are wrong in this affair, I mean to say, that what you are about to do is not only bad, but impolitic. In your pursuit of a victim, you are immolating yourself."

"Be it so! I go not alone to the stake,—there is another to partake of the torture," cried Glencore, wildly; and already his flushed cheek and flashing eyes betrayed the approach of a feverish access.

"If I am not to have any influence with you, then," resumed Upton, "I am here to no purpose. If to all that I say—to arguments you cannot answer—you obstinately persist in opposing an insane thirst for revenge, I see not why you should desire my presence. You have resolved to do this great wrong?"

"It is already done, sir," broke in Glencore.

"Wherein, then, can I be of any service to you?"

"I am coming to that. I had come to it before had you not interrupted me. I want you to be guardian to the boy. I want you to replace me in all that regards authority over him. You know life well, Upton. You know it not alone in its paths of pleasure and success, but you understand thoroughly the rugged footway over which humble men toil wearily to fortune. None can better estimate the man's chances of success, nor more surely point the road by which he is to attain it. The provision which I destine for him will be an humble one, and he will need to rely upon his own efforts. You will not refuse this service, Upton. I ask it in the name of our old friendship."

"There is but one objection I could possibly have, and yet that seems to be insurmountable."

"And what may it be?" cried Glencore.

"Simply that, in acceding to your request, I make myself an accomplice in your plan, and thus aid and abet the very scheme I am repudiating."

"What avails your repudiation if it will not turn me from my resolve? That it will not, I'll swear to you as solemnly as ever an



oath was taken. I tell you again, the thing is done. For the consequences which are to follow on it you have no responsibility—these are my concern."

"I should like a little time to think over it," said Upton, with the air of one struggling with irresolution. "Let me have this evening to make up my mind; to-morrow you shall have my answer."

"Be it so, then," said Glencore; and turning his face away, waved a cold farewell with his hand.

We do not purpose to follow Sir Horace as he retired, nor does our task require that we should pry into the secret recesses of his wily nature: enough if we say that in asking for time, his purpose was rather to afford another opportunity of reflection to Glencore than to give himself more space for deliberation. He had found, by the experience of his calling, that the delay we often crave for to resolve a doubt has sufficed to change the mind of him who originated the difficulty.

"I'll give him some hours, at least," thought he, "to ponder over what I have said. Who knows but the argument may seem better in memory than in action? Such things have happened before now." And having finished this reflection he turned to peruse the pamphlet of a quack doctor who pledged himself to cure all disorders of the circulation by attending to tidal influences, and made the moon herself enter into the *materia medica*. What Sir Horace believed, or did not believe, in the wild rhapsodies of the charlatan, is known only to himself. Whether his credulity was fed by the hope of obtaining relief, or whether his fancy only was aroused by the speculative images thus suggested, it is impossible to say. It is not altogether improbable that he perused these things as Charles Fox used to read all the trashiest novels in the Minerva Press, and find, in the very distorted and exaggerated pictures, a relief and a relaxation which more correct views of life had failed to impart. Hard-headed men require strange indulgences.

#### CHAPTER XIV.

##### BILLY TRAYNOR AND THE COLONEL.

It was a fine breezy morning as the Colonel set out with Billy Traynor for Belmullet. The bridle-path by which they travelled led through a wild and thinly-inhabited tract—now dipping down between grassy hills, now tracing its course along the cliffs over the sea. Tall ferns covered the slopes, protected from the west winds, and here and there little copses of stunted oak showed the traces of what once had been forest. It was on the whole a silent and dreary region, so

that the travellers felt it even relief as they drew nigh the bright blue sea, and heard the sonorous booming of the waves as they broke along the shore.

"It cheers one to come up out of those dreary dells, and hear the pleasant plash of the sea," said Harcourt; and his bright face showed that he felt the enjoyment.

"So it does, sir," said Billy. "And yet Homer makes his hero go heavy-hearted as he hears the ever-sounding sea."

"What does that signify, Doctor?" said Harcourt, impatiently. "Telling me what a character in a fiction feels affects me no more than telling me what he does. Why, man, the one is as unreal as the other. The fellow that created him fashioned his thoughts as well as his actions."

"To be sure he did; but when the fellow is a genius, what he makes is as much a creature as either you or myself."

"Come, come, Doctor, no mystification."

"I don't mean any," broke in Billy.

"What I want to say is this,—that as we read every character to elicit truth,—truth in the working of human motives—truth in passion—truth in all the struggles of our poor weak natures—why wouldn't a great genius like Homer, or Shakspeare, or Milton be better able to show us this in some picture drawn by themselves, than you or I be able to find it out for ourselves?"

Harcourt shook his head doubtfully.

"Well, now," said Billy, returning to the charge, "did you ever see a waxwork model of anatomy? Every nerve and sinew of a nerve was there—not a vein nor an artery wanting. The artist that made it all just wanted to show you where everything was; but he never wanted you to believe it was alive, or ever had been. But with genius it's different. He just gives you some traits of a character—he points him out to you passing—just as I would to a man going along the street—and there he is alive forever and ever; not like you and me, that will be dead and buried to-morrow or next day, and the most known of us three lines in a parish registry, but he goes down to posterity an example, an illustration—or a warning may be—to thousands and thousands of living men. Don't talk to me about fiction! What he thought and felt is truer than all that you and I, and a score like us, ever did or ever will do. The creations of genius are the landmarks of humanity—and well for us is it that we have such to guide us!"

"All this may be very fine," said Harcourt, contemptuously, "but give me the sentiments of a living man, or one that has lived, in preference to all the imaginary characters that have ever adorned a story."

"Just as I suppose you'd say that a soldier in the Blues, or some big, hulking corporal in the Guards, is a finer model of the human form than ever Praxiteles chiselled."

"I know which I'd rather have along side of me in a charge, Doctor," said Harcourt, laughing; and then to change the topic he pointed to a lone cabin on the seashore, miles away, as it seemed, from all other habitations.

"That's Mechel Cady's, sir," said Traynor: "he lives by birds; hunting them say-gulls and cormorants through the crevices of the rocks, and stealing the eggs. There isn't a precipice that he won't climb—not a cliff that he won't face."

"Well, if that be his home, the pursuit does not seem a profitable one."

"'T is as good as breaking stones on the road for fourpence a-day, or carrying seaweed five miles on your back to manure the potatoes," said Billy, mournfully.

"That's exactly the very thing that puzzles me," said Harcourt, "why in a country so remarkable for fertility every one should be so miserably poor!"

"And you never heard any explanation of it?"

"Never; at least, never one that satisfied me."

"Nor ever will you," said Billy, sententiously.

"And why so?"

"Because," said he, drawing a long breath, as if preparing for a discourse, "because there's no man capable of going into the whole subject; for it is not merely an economical question or a social one, but it is metaphysical, and religious, and political, and ethnological, and historical—ay, and geographical, too! You have to consider, first, who and what are the aborigines? A conquered people that never gave in they were conquered. Who are the rulers? A Saxon race that always felt that they were inferior to them they ruled over!"

"By Jove, doctor, I must stop you there; I never heard any acknowledgment of this inferiority you speak of."

"I'd like to get a goold medal for arguin' it out with you," said Billy.

"And, after all, I don't see how it would resolve the original doubt," said Harcourt. "I want to know why the people are so poor, and I don't want to hear of the battle of Clontarf or the Danes at Dundalk."

"There it is, you'd like to narrow down a great question of race, language, traditions, and laws, to a little miserable dispute about labor and wages. O, Manchester, Manchester! how ye're in the heart of every Englishman, rich or poor, gentle or simple!

You say you never heard of any confession of inferiority. Of course you didn't; but quite the reverse—a very confident sense of being far better than the poor Irish—an' I'll tell you how, and why, just as for yourself, after a discussion with me, when you find yourself dead bated, and not a word to reply, you'll go home to a good dinner and a bottle of wine, dry clothes and a bright fire; and, no matter how hard your argument pushed you, you'll remember that *I'm* in rags, in a dirty cabin, with potatoes to ate and water to drink, and you'll say, at all events, 'I'm better off than he is;' and there's your superiority, neither more or less—there it is! And all the while, in saying the same thing to yourself—sorrow matter for his fine broadcloth, and his white linen, and his very best roast beef that he's eatin'—I'm his master! I'm all that dignifies the species in them grand qualities that makes us poets, rhetoricians, and the like, in those elegant attributes that, as the poet says—

"In all our pursuits  
Lift us high above brutes."

In these, I say again, I'm his master!"

As Billy finished his gloomy panegyric upon his country and himself, he burst out in a joyous laugh, and cried, "Did ye ever hear conceit like that? Did ye ever expect to see the day that a ragged poor blackguard like *me* would dare to say as much to one like *you*? and, after all, it's the greatest compliment I could pay you."

"How so, Billy—I don't exactly see *that*?"

"Why, that if you weren't a gentleman—a real gentleman, born and bred—I could never have ventured to tell you what I said now. It is because, in *your own* refined feelings, you can pardon all the coarseness of *mine*, that I have my safety."

"You're as great a courtier as you are a scholar, Billy," said Harcourt, laughing; "meanwhile, I'm not likely to be enlightened in the cause of Irish poetry."

"'T is a whole volume I could write on the same subject," said Billy; "for there's so many causes in operation, combinin', assistin' and aggravatin' each other. But if you want the head and front of the mischief in one word, it is this, that no Irishman ever gave his heart and soule to his own business, but always was mindin' something else that he had nothin' to say to; and so, ye see, the priest does be thinkin' of politics, the parson's be thinkin' of the priests, the people are always on the watch for a crack at the agent or the tithe-proctor, and the landlord, instead of looking after his property, is up in Dublin dinin' with the Lord Leftinant and abusin' his tenants. I don't want to screen myself, nor



say I'm better than my neighbors, for though I have a larned profession to live by, I'd rather be writin' a ballad, and singin' it too, down Thomas-street, than I'd be lecturin' at the Surgeons' Hall."

"You are certainly a very strange people," said Harcourt.

"And yet there's another thing stranger still, which is, that your countrymen never took any advantage of our eccentricities, to rule us by; and if they had any wit in their heads, they'd have seen, easy enough, that all these traits are exactly the clues to a nation's heart. That's what Pitt meant when he said, 'Let me make the *songs* of a people, and I don't care who makes the *laws*.' Look down now in that glen before you, as far as you can see. There's Belmullet, and an't you glad to be so near your journey's end, for you're mighty tired of all this discoorsin'."

"On the contrary, Billy, even when I disagree with what you say, I'm pleased to hear your reasons; at the same time I'm glad we are drawing nigh to this poor boy, and I only trust we may not be too late."

Billy muttered a pious concurrence in the wish, and they rode along for some time in silence. "There's the Bay of Belmullet now under your feet," cried Billy, as he pulled up short, and pointed with his whip seaward. "There's five fathoms, and fine anchoring ground on every inch ye see there. There's elegant shelter from tempestuous winds. There's a coast rich in herrings, oysters, lobsters, and crabs; farther out there's cod and haddock, and mackerel in the sayson. There's sea wrack for kelp, and every other convenience any one can require, and a poorer set of devils than ye'll see when we get down there, there's nowhere to be found. Well! well! if idleness is bliss, it's folly to work hard." And with this paraphrase, Billy made way for the Colonel, as the path had now become too narrow for two abreast, and in this way they descended to the shore.

#### CHAPTER XV.

##### "A SICK BED."

ALTHOUGH the cabin in which the sick boy lay was one of the best in the village, its interior presented a picture of great poverty. It consisted of a single room, in the middle of which a mud wall of a few feet in height formed a sort of partition, abutting against which was the bed—the one bed of the entire family—now devoted to the guest. Two or three coarsely-fashioned stools, a rickety table, and a still more rickety dresser, comprised all the furniture. The floor was uneven and fissured, and the solitary window was mended with an old hat,

thus diminishing the faint light that struggled through the narrow aperture.

A large net, attached to the rafters, hung down in heavy festoons over-head, the corks and sinks dangling in dangerous proximity to the heads underneath. Several spars and oars littered one corner, and a newly-painted buoy filled another; but, in spite of all these incumbrances, there was space around the fire for a goodly company of some eight or nine of all ages; who were pleasantly eating their supper from a large pot of potatoes that smoked and steamed in front of them.

"God save all here!" cried Billy, as he preceded the Colonel into the cabin.

"Save ye kindly," was the courteous answer, in a chorus of voices, at the same time, seeing a gentleman at the door, the whole party arose at once to receive him. Nothing could have surpassed the perfect good breeding with which the fisherman and his wife did the honors of their humble home, and Harcourt at once forgot the poverty-struck aspect of the scene in the general courtesy of the welcome.

"He's no better, your honor—no better at all," said the man, as Harcourt drew nigh the sick bed. "He does be always ravin'—ravin' on—beggin' and implorin' that we won't take him back to the Castle; and if he falls asleep, the first thing he says when he wakes up is, 'Where am I?—tell me I'm not at Glencore!' and he keeps on schreechin', 'Tell me—tell him so!'"

Harcourt bent down over the bed and gazed at him. Slowly and languidly the sick boy raised his heavy lids, and returned the stare.

"You know me, Charley, boy, don't you?" said he, softly.

"Yes," muttered he, in a weak tone.

"Who am I, Charley—tell me who is speaking to you?"

"Yes," said he again.

"Poor fellow!" sighed Harcourt, "he does *not* know me!"

"Where's the pain?" asked Billy, suddenly.

The boy placed his hand on his forehead, and then on his temples.

"Look up! look at *me*!" said Billy.

"Aye, there it is! the pupil does not contract—there's mischief in the brain. He wants to say something to you, sir," said he to Harcourt; "he's makin' signs to you to stoop down."

Harcourt put his ear close to the sick boy's lips, and listened.

"No, my dear child, of course not," said he, after a pause. "You shall remain here, and I will stay with you too. In a few days your father will come"—

A wild yell, a shriek that made the cabin

ring, now broke from the boy, followed by another, and then a third; and then with a spring he arose from the bed, and tried to escape. Weak and exhausted as he was, such was the strength supplied by fever, it was all that they could do to subdue him and replace him in the bed; violent convulsions followed this severe access, and it was not till after hours of intense suffering that he calmed down again, and seemed to slumber.

"There's more than we know of here, Colonel," said Billy, as he drew him to one side. "There's moral causes as well as malady at work."

"There may be, but I know nothing of them," said Harcourt; and in the frank air of the speaker the other did not hesitate to repose his trust.

"If we hope to save him, we ought to find out where the mischief lies," said Billy, "for, if ye remark, his ravin' is always upon one subject; he never wanders from that."

"He has a dread of home. Some altercation with his father has, doubtless, impressed him with this notion."

"Ah, that isn't enough, we must go deeper; we want a clue to the part of the brain engaged; meanwhile, here's at him, with the antiphlogistic touch;" and he opened his lancet-case, and tucked up his cuffs. "Houlde the basin, Biddy."

"There, Harvey himself could n't do it nater than that. It's an elegant study to be feelin' a pulse while the blood is flowin'. It comes at first like a dammed up cataract, a regular outpouring, just as a young girl would tell her love, all wild and tumultuous; then, after a time, she gets more temperate, the feelings are relieved, and the ardor is moderated, till, at last, wearied and worn out, the heart seems to ask for rest; and then, ye'll remark a settled faint smile coming over the lips, and a clammy coldness in the face."

"He's faintin', sir," broke in Biddy.

"He is, ma'am, and it's myself done it," said Billy. "O dear, O dear! If we could only do with the moral heart what we can do with the raal physical one, what wonderful poets we'd be!"

"What hopes have you?" whispered Harcourt.

"The best, the very best. There's youth and a fine constitution to work upon, and what more does a doctor want? As ould Marsden said, 'You can't destroy these in a fortnight, so the patient must live.' But you must help me, Colonel, and you *can* help me."

"Command me in any way, doctor."

"Here's the 'modus,' then. You must go back to the Castle and find out, if you can, what happened between his father and him. It does not signify now, nor will it for some days; but when he comes to the convalescent stage, it's then we'll need to know how to manage him, and what subjects to keep him away from. 'Tis the same with the brain as with a sprained ancle; you may exercise if you don't twist it; but just come down once on the wrong spot, and may-be ye won't yell out!"

"You'll not quit him, then?"

"I'm a senthry on his post, waiting to get a shot at the enemy if he shows the top of his head. Ah, sir, if ye only knew physie, ye'd acknowledge there's nothing as treacherous as dizaze. Ye hunt him out of the brain, and then he is in the lungs. Ye chase him out of that, and he skulks in the liver. At him there, and he takes to the fibrous membranes, and then it is regular hide and go seek all over the body. Trackin' a bear is child's play to it;" and so saying, Billy held the Colonel's stirrup for him to mount, and, giving his most courteous salutation, and his best wishes for a good journey, he turned and re-entered the cabin.



## CHAPTER XVI.

## "THE PROJECT."

It was not without surprise that Harcourt saw Glencore enter the drawing-room a few minutes before dinner. Very pale and very feeble, he slowly traversed the room, giving a hand to each of his guests, and answering the inquiries for his health by a sickly smile, while he said, "As you see me."

"I am going to dine with you to-day, Harcourt," said he, with an attempt at gayety of manner. "Upton tells me that a little exertion of this kind will do me good."

"Upton's right," cried the Colonel, "especially if he added that you should take a glass or two of that admirable Burgundy. My life on 't, but that is the liquor to set a man on his legs again."

"I did n't remark that this was exactly the effect it produced upon you t'other night," said Upton, with one of his own sly laughs.

"That comes of drinking it in bad company," retorted Harcourt; "a man is driven to take two glasses for one."

As the dinner proceeded, Glencore rallied considerably, taking his part in the conversation, and evidently enjoying the curiously contrasted temperaments at either side of him. The one, all subtlety, refinement, and finesse; the other, out-spoken, rude, and true-hearted; rarely correct in a question of taste, but invariably right in every matter of honorable dealing. Though it was clear enough that Upton relished the eccentricities whose sallies he provoked, it was no less easy to see how thoroughly he appreciated the frank and manly nature of the old soldier; nor could all the crafty habits of his acute mind overcome the hearty admiration with which he regarded him.

It is in the unrestricted ease of these "little dinners," where two or three old friends are met, that social intercourse assumes its most charming form. The usages of the great world, which exact a species of uniformity of breeding and manners, are here laid aside, and men talk with all the bias and prejudices of their true nature, dashing the topics discussed with traits of personality and even whims that are most amusing. How little do we carry away of tact or wisdom from the grand banquets of life; and what pleasant stores of thought, what charming memories remain to us, after those small gatherings!

How, as I write this, one little room rises to my recollection, with its quaint old side-board of carved oak; its dark brown cabinets, curiously sculptured; its heavy, old brocade curtains, and all its queer devices of nick-nackery, where such meetings once were held, and where, throwing off the cares of

life, shut out from them as it were, by the massive folds of the heavy drapery across the door, we talked in all the fearless freedom of old friendship, rambling away from theme to theme, contrasting our experiences, balancing our views in life, and mingling through our converse the racy freshness of a boy's enjoyment with the sager counsels of a man's reflectiveness. Alas, how very early is it sometimes in life that we tread "the banquet hall deserted." But to our story: the evening wore pleasantly on; Upton talked as few but himself could do, upon the public questions of the day, and Harcourt, with many a blunt interruption, made the discourse but more easy and amusing. The soldier was indeed less at his ease than the others. It was not alone that many of the topics were not such as he was most familiar with, but he felt angry and indignant at Glencore's seeming indifference as to the fate of his son. Not a single reference to him even occurred; his name was never even passingly mentioned. Nothing but the careworn sickly face, the wasted form and dejected expression before him, could have restrained Harcourt from alluding to the boy. He bethought him, however, that any indiscretion on his part might have the gravest consequences. Upton, too, might have said something to quiet Glencore's mind. "At all events, I'll wait," said he to himself; "for wherever there is much delicacy in a negotiation, I generally make a mess of it." The more genially, therefore, did Glencore lend himself to the pleasure of the conversation, the more provoked did Harcourt feel at his heartlessness, and the more did the struggle cost him, to control his own sentiments.

Upton, who detected the secret working of men's minds with a marvellous exactness, saw how the poor Colonel was suffering, and that in all probability some unhappy explosion would at last ensue, and took an opportunity of remarking that though all this chit chat was delightful for them, Glencore was still a sick man.

"We must n't forget, Harcourt," said he, "that a chicken broth diet includes very digestible small talk; and here we are leading our poor friend through politics, war, diplomacy, and the rest of it, just as if he had the stomach of an old campaigner, and"—

"And the brain of a great diplomatist! Say it out, man, and avow honestly the share of excellence you accord to each of us," broke in Harcourt, laughing.

"I would to heaven we could exchange," sighed Upton languidly.

"The saints forbid," exclaimed the other: "and it would do us little good if we were able."

"Why so?"

"I'd never know what to do with that fine intellect if I had it; and as for you, what with your confounded pills and mixtures, your infernal lotions and embrocations, you'd make my sound system as bad as your own in three months' time."

"You are quite wrong, my dear Harcourt. I should treat the stomach as you would do the brain,—give it next to nothing to do, in the hopes it might last the longer."

"There now, good-night," said Harcourt; "he's always the better for bitters, whether he gives or takes them;" and with a good-humored laugh he left the room.

Glencore's eyes followed him as he retired; and then as they closed, an expression of long repressed suffering settled down on his features, so marked, that Upton hastily asked, "Are you ill—are you in pain, Glencore?"

"In pain? Yes," said he, "these two hours back I have been suffering intensely; but there's no help for it! Must you really leave this to-morrow, Upton?"

"I must. This letter from the Foreign Office requires my immediate presence in London, with a very great likelihood of being obliged to start at once for the Continent."

"And I had so much to say—so many things to consult you on," sighed the other.

"Are you equal to it now?" asked Upton.

"I must try, at all events. You shall learn my plan." He was silent for some minutes, and sat with his head resting on his hand, in deep reflection. At last he said, "Has it ever occurred to you, Upton, that some incident of the past, some circumstance in itself insignificant, should rise up, as it were, in after life to suit an actual emergency, just as though fate had fashioned it for such a contingency?"

"I cannot say that I have experienced what you describe; if I, indeed, fully understand it."

"I'll explain better by an instance. You know now,"—here his voice became slow, and the words fell with a marked distinctness,— "you know now what I intend by this woman. Well, just as if to make my plan more feasible, a circumstance intended for a very different object offers itself to my aid. When my uncle, Sir Miles Herrick, heard that I was about to marry a foreigner, he declared that he would never leave me a shilling of his fortune. I am not very sure that I cared much for the threat when it was uttered. My friends, however, thought differently, and though they did not attempt to dissuade me from my marriage, they suggested that I should try some means of overcoming this prejudice; at all events, that I should not hurry on the match without an effort to obtain his consent. I agreed, not

very willingly indeed, and so the matter remained. The circumstance was well known amongst my two or three most intimate friends, and constantly discussed by them. I needn't tell you that the tone in which such things are talked of as often partakes of levity as seriousness. They gave me all manner of absurd counsels, one more outrageously ridiculous than the other. At last one day we were pic-nicking at Bala, Old Clifford—you remember that original who had the famous schooner-yacht 'The Breeze'—well, he took me aside after dinner, and said, 'Glencore, I have it—I have just hit upon the expedient. Your uncle and I were old chums at Christ Church fifty years ago. What if we were to tell him that you were going to marry a daughter of mine? I don't think he'd object. I'm half certain he'd not. I have been abroad these five-and-thirty years. Nobody in England knows much about me now. Old Herrick can't live forever, he is my senior by a good ten or twelve years, and if the delusion only last his time'—

"But perhaps you have a daughter?" broke I in.

"I have, and she is married already, so there is no risk on that score.' I needn't repeat all that he said for, nor that I urged against the project; for though it was after dinner, and we all had drunk very freely, the deception was one I firmly rejected. When a man shows a great desire to serve you on a question of no common difficulty, it is very hard to be severe upon his counsels, however unscrupulous they may be. In fact, you accept them as proofs of friendship only the stronger, seeing how much they must have cost him to offer."

Upton smiled dubiously, and Glencore, blushing slightly, said, "You don't concur in this, I perceive."

"Not exactly," said Upton, in his silkiest of tones; "I rather regard these occasions as I should do the generosity of a man who, filling my hand with base money, should say, 'Pass it if you can!'"

"In this case, however," resumed Glencore, "he took his share of the fraud, or at least was willing to do so, for I distinctly said No to the whole scheme. He grew very warm about it; at one moment appealing to my 'good sense, not to kick seven thousand a-year out of the window;' at the next, in half quarrelsome mood, asking 'if it were any objection I had to be connected with his family.' To get rid of a very troublesome subject, and to end a controversy that threatened to disturb a party, I said at last, 'We'll talk it over to-morrow, Clifford, and if your arguments be as good as your heart, then perhaps they may yet convince me.'



This ended the theme, and we parted. I started the next day on a shooting excursion into Calabria, and when I got back it was not of meeting W—— I was thinking. I hastened to meet the bella Torres, and then came our elopement. You know the rest. We went to the East, passed the winter in Upper Egypt, and came to Cairo in spring, where Charley was born. I got back to Naples after a year or two, and then found that my uncle had just died, and in consequence of my marrying the daughter of his old and attached friend, Sir Guy Clifford, had reversed the intention of his will, and by a codicil left me his sole heir. It was thus that my marriage, and even my boy's birth, became inserted in the peerage; my solicitor, in his vast eagerness for my interests, having taken care to endorse the story with his own name. The disinherited nephews and nieces, the half cousin and others, soon got wind of the real facts, and contested the will, on the ground of its being executed under a delusion. I, of course, would not resist their claim, and satisfied myself by denying the statement as to my marriage; and so, after affording the current subject of gossip for a season, I was completely forgotten, the more as we soon went to live abroad, and never mixed with English. And now, Upton, it is this same incident I would utilize for the present occasion, though, as I said before, when it originally occurred it had a very different signification."

"I don't exactly see how," said Upton.

"In this wise. My real marriage was never inserted in the peerage. I'll now manage that it shall so appear, to give me the opportunity of formally contradicting it, and alluding to the strange persistence with which, having married me some fifteen years ago to a lady who never existed, they now are pleased to unite me to one whose character might have secured me against the calumny. I'll threaten an action for libel, &c., obtain a most full, explicit, and abject apology, and then, when this has gone the round of all the journals of Europe, her doom is sealed!"

"But she has surely letters, writings, proofs of some sort."

"No, Upton, I have not left a scrap in her possession; she has not a line, not a letter to vindicate her. On the night I broke open her writing-desk, I took away everything that bore the traces of my own hand. I tell you again, she is in my power, and never was power less disposed to mercy."

"Once more, my dear friend," said Upton, "I am driven to tell you that I cannot be a profitable counsellor in a matter to every detail of which I object. Consider calmly for one moment what you are doing. See that, in your desire to be avenged upon

her, you throw the heaviest share of the penalty on your own poor boy. I am not her advocate now. I will not say one word to mitigate the course of your anger towards her, but remember that you are actually defrauding him of his birth-right. This is not a question where you have a choice. There is no discretionary power left you."

"I'll do it," said Glencore, with a savage energy.

"In other words, to wreak a vengeance upon one, you are prepared to immolate another, not only guiltless, but who possesses every claim to your love and affection."

"And do you think that if I sacrifice the last tie that attaches me to life, Upton, that I retire from this contest heart-whole? No, far from it; I go forth from the struggle broken, blasted, friendless!"

"And do you mean that this vengeance should outlive you? Suppose, for instance, that she should survive you?"

"It shall be to live on in shame, then," cried he savagely.

"And were she to die first?"

"In that case—I have not thought well enough about that. It is possible—it is just possible; but these are subtleties, Upton, to detach me from my purpose, or weaken my resolution to carry it through. You would apply the craft of your calling to the case, and by suggesting emergencies, open a road to evasions. Enough for me the present. I neither care to prejudge the future, nor control it. I know," cried he suddenly, and with eyes flashing angrily as he spoke, "I know that if you desire to use the confidence I have reposed in you against me, you can give me trouble and even difficulty, but I defy Sir Horace Upton, with all his skill and all his cunning, to outwit me."

There was that in the tone in which he uttered these words, and the exaggerated energy of his manner, that convinced Upton Glencore's reason was not intact. It was not what could amount to aberration in the ordinary sense, but sufficient evidence was there to show that judgment had become so obscured by passion, that the mental power was weakened with the moral.

"Tell me, therefore, Upton," cried he, "before we part, do you leave this house my friend or my enemy?"

"It is as your sincere, attached friend that I now dispute with you, inch by inch, a dangerous position, with a judgment under no influence from passion, viewing this question by the coldest of all tests—mere expediency"—

"There it is," broke in Glencore; "you claim an advantage over me, because you are devoid of feeling; but this is a case, sir, where the sense of injury gives the instinct

of reparation. Is it nothing to me, think you, that I am content to go down dishonored to my grave, but also to be the last of my name and station? Is it nothing that a whole line of honorable ancestry is extinguished at once? Is it nothing, that I surrender him who formed my sole solace and companionship in life? You talk of your calm, unbiassed mind; but I tell you, till your brain be on fire like mine, and your heart swollen to very bursting, that you have no right to dictate to *me*! Besides, it is done! The blow has fallen," added he, with a deeper solemnity of voice. "The gulf that separates us is already created. She and I can meet no more. But why continue this contest? It was to aid me in directing that boy's fortunes I first sought your advice, not to attempt to dissuade me from what I will not be turned from."

"In what way can I serve you?" said Upton, calmly.

"Will you consent to be his guardian?"

"I will."

Glencore seized the other's hand, and pressed it to his heart, and for some seconds he could not speak.

"This is all that I ask, Upton," said he.

"It is the greatest boon friendship could accord me. I need no more. Could you have remained here a day or two more, we could have settled upon some plan together as to his future life; as it is, we can arrange it by letter."

"He must leave this," said Upton, thoughtfully.

"Of course — at once!"

"How far is Harcourt to be informed in this matter — have you spoken to him already?"

"No; nor mean to do so. I should have from him nothing but reproaches for having betrayed the boy into false hopes of a station he was never to fill. You must tell Harcourt. I leave it to yourself to find the suitable means."

"We shall need his assistance, for the moment at least," said Upton, whose quick faculties were already busily travelling many a mile of the future. "I'll see him to-night, and try what can be done. In a few days you will have turned over in your mind what you yourself destine for him — the fortune you mean to give" —

"It is already done," said Glencore, laying a sealed letter on the table. "All that I purpose in his behalf you will find there."

"All this detail is too much for you, Glencore," said the other, seeing that a weary, depressed expression had come over him, while his voice grew weaker with every word. "I shall not leave this till late to-

morrow, so that we can meet again. And now, good-night."

#### CHAPTER XVII.

##### A TETE-A-TETE.

WHEN Harcourt was aroused from his sound sleep by Upton, and requested in the very blandest tones of that eminent diplomatist to lend him every attention of his very remarkable faculties, he was not by any means certain that he was not engaged in a strange dream; nor was the suspicion at all dispelled by the revelations addressed to him.

"Just dip the end of that towel in the water, Upton, and give it to me," cried he at last; and then, wiping his face and forehead, said: "Have I heard you aright — there was no marriage?"

Upton nodded assent.

"What a shameful way has he treated this poor boy, then," cried the other. "I never heard of anything equal to it in cruelty; and I conclude it was breaking this news to the lad that drove him out to sea on that night, and brought on this brain fever. By Jove, I'd not take *his* title, and *your* brains, to have such a sin on my conscience!"

"We are happily not called on to judge the act," said Upton, cautiously.

"And why not? Is it not every honest man's duty to reprobate whatever he detects dishonorable or disgraceful? I do judge him, and sentence him too; and I say, moreover, that a more cold-blooded piece of cruelty I never heard of. He trains up this poor boy from childhood to fancy himself the heir to his station and fortune; he nurses in him all the pride that only a high rank can cover, and then, when the lad's years have brought him to the period when these things assume all their value, he sends for him to tell him he is a bastard."

"It is not impossible that I think worse of Glencore's conduct than you do yourself," said Upton, gravely.

"But you never told him so, I'll be sworn — you never said to him that it was a rascally action. I'll lay a hundred pounds on it, you only expostulated on the inexpediency, or the inconvenience, or some such trumpery consideration, and did not tell him in round numbers that what he had done was an infamy."

"Then I fancy you'd lose your money pretty much as you are losing your temper, that is, without getting anything in requital."

"What did you say to him, then?" said Harcourt, slightly abashed.

"A great deal in the same strain as you have just spoken in, doubtless not as warm in vituperation, but possibly as likely to pro-



duce an effect; nor is it in the least necessary to dwell upon that. What Glencore has done, and what I have said about it, both belong to the past. They are over — they are irrevocable. It is to what concerns the present and the future I wish now to address myself, and to interest you."

"Why, the boy's name was in the peerage — I read it there myself."

"My dear Harcourt, you must have paid very little attention to me awhile ago, or you would have understood how that occurred."

"And here were all the people, the tenantry, the estate, calling him the young lord, and the poor fellow growing up with the proud consciousness that the title was his due."

"There is not a hardship of the case I have not pictured to my own mind as forcibly as you can describe it," said Upton; "but I really do not perceive that any reprobation of the past has in the slightest assisted me in providing for the future."

"And then," murmured Harcourt, for all the while he was pursuing his own train of thought, quite irrespective of all Upton was saying, "and then he turns him adrift on the world, without friend or fortune."

"It is precisely that he may have both the one and the other that I have come to confer with you now," replied Upton. "Glencore has made a liberal provision for the boy, and asked me to become his guardian. I have no fancy for the trust, but I didn't see how I could decline it. In this letter he assigns to him an income, which shall be legally secured to him. He commits to me the task of directing his education, and suggesting some future career; and for both these objects I want your counsel."

"Education — prospects — why, what are you talking about? A poor fellow who has not a name, nor a home, nor one to acknowledge him: what need has he of education, or what chance of prospects? I'd send him to sea, and, if he was n't drowned before he came to manhood, I'd give him his fortune, whatever it was, and say, go settle in some of the colonies. You have no right to train him up, to meet fresh mortifications and insults in life — to be flouted by every fellow that has a father, and outraged by every cur whose mother was married."

"And are the colonies especially inhabited by illegitimate offspring?" said Upton, drily.

"At least he'd not be met with a rebuff at every step he made. The rude life of toil would be better than the polish of a civilization that could only reflect upon him."

"Not badly said, Harcourt," said Upton, smiling; "but as to the boy, I have other

prospects. He has, if I mistake not, very good faculties. You estimate them even higher. I don't see why they should be neglected. If he merely possess the mediocrity of gifts which make men tolerable lawyers and safe doctors, why, perhaps, he may turn them into some channel. If he really can lay claim to higher qualities, they must not be thrown away."

"Which means, that he ought to be bred up to diplomacy," said Harcourt.

"Perhaps," said the other, with a bland inclination of the head.

"And what can an old dragoon like myself contribute to such an object?" asked Harcourt.

"You can be of infinite service in many ways," said Upton, "and for the present I wish to leave the boy in your care till I can learn something about my own destiny. This, of course, I shall know in a few days. Meanwhile you'll look after him, and, as soon as his removal becomes safe, you'll take him away from this, it does not much matter whither; probably some healthy, secluded spot in Wales, for a week or two, would be advisable. Glencore and he must not meet again; if ever they are to do so, it must be after a considerable lapse of time."

"Have you thought of a name for him, or is his to be still Massy?" asked Harcourt, bluntly.

"He is to take the maternal name of Glencore's family, and be called Doyle, and the settlements will be drawn up in that name."

"I'll be shot, if I like to have any share in the whole transaction! Some day or other it will all come out, and who knows how much blame may be imputed to us, perhaps for actually advising the entire scheme," said Harcourt.

"You must see, my dear Harcourt, that you are only refusing aid to alleviate an evil, and not to devise one. If this boy —"

"Well — well — I give in. I'd rather comply at once than be preached into acquiescence. Even when you do not convince me, I feel ashamed to oppose myself to so much cleverness; so, I repeat, I'm at your orders."

"Admirably spoken," said Upton with a smile.

"My greatest difficulty of all," said Harcourt, "will be to meet Glencore again after all this. I know, I feel, I never can forgive him."

"Perhaps he will not ask forgiveness, Harcourt," said the other with one of his slyest looks. "Glencore is a strange self-opinionated fellow, and has amongst other odd notions that of going the road he likes best

himself. Besides, there is another consideration here, and with no man will it weigh more than with yourself. Glencore has been dangerously ill—at this moment we can scarcely say that he has recovered; his state is yet one of anxiety and doubt. You are the last who would forget such infirmity, nor is it necessary, to secure your pity, that I should say how seriously the poor fellow is now suffering."

"I trust he'll not speak to me about this business," said Harcourt, after a pause.

"Very probably he will not. He will know that I have already told you everything, so that there will be no need of any communication from him."

"I wish from my heart and soul I had never come here. I would to Heaven I had gone away at once, as I first intended. I like that boy, I feel he has fine stuff in him, and now"—

"Come, come, Harcourt, it's the fault of all soft-hearted fellows, like yourself—that this kindness degenerates into selfishness, and they have such a regard for their own feelings, that they never agree to anything that wounds them. Just remember that you and I have very small parts in this drama, and the best way we can do is to fill them without giving ourselves the airs of chief characters."

"You're at your old game, Upton; you are always ready to wet yourself, provided you give another fellow a ducking."

"Only if he get a worse one, or take longer to dry after it," remarked Upton, laughing.

"Quite true, by Jove," chimed in the other, "you take special care to come off best; and now you're going," added he, as Upton rose to withdraw, "and I'm certain that I have not half comprehended what you want from me."

"You shall have it in writing, Harcourt; I'll send you a clear despatch the first spare moment I can command after I reach town. The boy will not be fit to move for some time to come, and so good-bye."

"You don't know where they are going to send you?"

"I cannot frame even a conjecture," sighed Upton, languidly. "I ought to be in the Brazils for a week or so about that slave question; and then, the sooner I reach Constantinople the better."

"Won't they want you at Paris?" asked Harcourt, who felt a kind of quiet vengeance in developing what he deemed the weak vanity of the other.

"Yes," sighed he again, "but I can't be everywhere;" and so saying, he lounged away, while it would have taken a far more subtle listener than Harcourt to say whether

he was mystifying the other, or the dupe of his own self-esteem.

#### CHAPTER XVIII.

##### BILLY TRAYNOR AS ORATOR.

THREE weeks rolled over: an interval not without its share of interest for the inhabitants of the little village of Leenane, since on one morning Mr. Craggs had made his appearance on his way to Clifden, and after an absence of two days returned to the castle. The subject for popular discussion and surmise had not yet declined, when a boat was seen to leave Glencore, heavily laden with trunks and travelling gear, and as she neared the land, the lord was detected amongst the passengers, looking very ill—almost dying; he passed up the little street of the village, scarcely noticing the uncovered heads which saluted him respectfully. Indeed, he scarcely lifted up his eyes, and, as his acute observers remarked, never once turned a glance towards the opposite shore where the castle stood.

He had not reached the end of the village, when a chaise with four horses arrived at the spot. No time was lost in arranging the trunks and portmanteaus, and Lord Glencore sat moodily on a bank, listlessly regarding what went forward. At length Craggs came up, and touching his cap in military fashion, announced all was ready.

Lord Glencore arose slowly, and looked languidly around him; his features wore the mingled expression of weariness and anxiety, like one not fully awakened from an oppressive dream. He turned his eyes on the people, who at a respectful distance stood around, and in a voice of peculiar melancholy, said, "Good-bye."—"A good journey to you, my lord, and safe back again to us," cried a number together.

"Eh, what, what was that?" cried he suddenly, and the tones were shrill and discordant in which he spoke.

A warning gesture from Craggs imposed silence in the crowd, and not a word was uttered.

"I thought they said something about coming back again," muttered Glencore gloomily. "They were wishing you a good journey, my lord," replied Craggs.

"O, that was it, was it?" and so saying, with bent down head, he walked feebly forward and entered the carriage. Craggs was speedily on the box, and the next moment they were away.

It is no part of our task to dwell on the sage speculations and wise surmises of the village on this event. They had not, it is true, much "evidence" before them, but they were hardy guessers, and there was very little within the limits of possibility, which they did not summon to the aid of their im-



aginations. All however were tolerably agreed upon one point—that to leave the place, while the young lord was still unable to quit his bed and too weak to sit up, was unnatural and unfeeling; traits which “after all” they thought not very surprising, since the likes of these lords never cared for any body.

Colonel Harcourt still remained at Glencore, and under his rigid sway the strictest blockade of the coast was maintained, nor was any intercourse whatever permitted with the village. A boat from the castle, meeting another from Leenane, half way in the lough, received the letters and whatever other resources the village supplied. All was done with the rigid exactness of a quarantine regulation, and if the main-land had been scourged with plague, stricter measures of exclusion could scarcely have been enforced.

In comparison with the present occupant of the castle, the late one was a model of amiability; and the village, as is the wont in the case, now discovered a vast number of good qualities in the “lord,” when they had lost him. After a while, however, the guesses, the speculations, and the comparisons all died away, and the Castle of Glencore was as much dream-land to their imaginations, as, seen across the lough in the dim twilight of an evening in autumn, its towers might have appeared to their eyes.

It was about a month after Lord Glencore’s departure, of a fine, soft evening in summer, Billy Traynor suddenly appeared in the village. Billy was one of a class who, whatever their rank in life, are always what Coleridge would have called “noticeable men.” He was soon, therefore, surrounded with a knot of eager and inquiring friends, all solicitous to know something of the life he was leading; what they were doing “beyant at the castle.”

“It’s a mighty quiet studious kind of life,” said Billy, “but it agrees with me wonderfully; for I may say that until now I never was able to give my ‘janius’ fair play. Professional life is the ruin of the student, and being always obliged to be thinkin’ of the bags destroyed my taste for letters.” A grin of self-approval at his own witticism closed this speech.

“But is it true, the lord is going to break up house entirely, and not come back here?” asked Peter Slevin, the sacristan; whose rank and station warranted his assuming the task of cross-questioner.

“There’s various ways of breakin’ up a house,” said Billy; “ye may do so in a moral sense, or in a physical sense; you may obliterate, or extinguish, or, without going so far, you may simply obfuscate—do you perceive?”

“Yes!” said the sacristan, on whom every eye was now bent, to see if he was able to follow subtleties that had outwitted the rest.

“And whin I say *obfuscate*,” resumed Billy, “I open a question of disputed etymology, bekase tho’ Lucretius thinks the word *obfuscator* original, there’s many supposes it comes from *ob*, and *fucus*, the dye the ancients used in their wool, as we find in Horace, *lana fuco medicata*; while Cicero employs it in another sense, and says, *facere fucum*, which is as much as to say humbuggin’ somebody—do ye mind?”

“Be Gorra, he might guess that anyhow!” muttered a shrewd little tailor, with a significance that provoked hearty laughter.

“And now,” continued Billy, with an air of triumph, “we’ll proceed to the next point.”

“Ye need n’t trouble yerself, then,” said Terry Lynch, “for Peter is gone home!”

And so, to the amusement of the meeting, it turned out to be the case; the sacristan had retired from the controversy. “Come in here to Mrs. Moore’s, Billy, and take a glass with us,” said Terry, “it is n’t often we see you in these parts.”

“If the honorable company will graciously vouchsafe and condescend to let me trate them to a half-gallon,” said Billy, “it will be the proudest event of my terrestrial existence.”

The proposition was received with a cordial enthusiasm, flattering to all concerned, and in a few minutes after, Billy Traynor sat at the head of a long table in the neat parlor of “The Griddle,” with a company of some fifteen or sixteen very convivially disposed friends around him.

“If I was Cæsar, or Lucretius, or Nebuchadnezzar, I could n’t be prouder,” said Billy, as he looked down the board. “And let moralists talk as they will, there’s a beautiful expansion of sentiment—there’s a fine genial overflowin’ of the heart in gatherins like this—where we mingle our feelings and our philosophy; and our love and our learning walk hand in hand like brothers—pass the sperits, Mr. Shea. If we look to the ancient writers, what do we see? Lemons; bring in some lemons, Mickey. What do we see, I say, but that the very highest enjoyment of the haythen gods was—hot wather! why won’t they send in more hot wather!”

“Be Gorra, if I was a haythen god, I’d like a little whiskey in it,” muttered Terry, drily.

“Where was I?” asked Billy, a little disconcerted by this sally, and the laugh it excited.

“I was expatiatin’ upon celestial convivialities. The *noctes canaque decum*—them

elegant hospitalities, where wisdom was moistened with nectar, and wit washed down with ambrosia. It is not, by coorse, to be expected," continued he, modestly, "that we mere mortals can compete with them elegant refectations. But, as Ovid says, we can at least *diem jucundam decipere*."

The unknown tongue had now restored to Billy all the reverence and respect of his auditory, and he continued to expatiate very eloquently on the wholesome advantages to be derived from convivial intercourse, both amongst gods and men, rather slyly intimating that either on the score of the fluids, or the conversation, his own leanings lay towards "the humanities." "For after all," said he, "'t is our own wakenesses is often the source of our most refined enjoyments. No, Mrs. Cassidy, ye need n't be blushin'. I'm considerin' my subject in a high ethnological and metaphysical sinse." Mrs. Cassidy's confusion, and the mirth it excited, here interrupted the orator.

"The meetin' is never tired of hearin' you, Billy," said Terry Lynch, "but if it was plazin' to ye to give us a song, we'd enjoy it greatly."

"Ah!" said Billy, with a sigh, "I have taken my parting kiss with the Muses — *non mihi licet increpare digitis lyram*."

"No more to feel poetic fire,  
No more to touch the soundin' lyre;  
And wiser coorses to begin,  
I now forsake my violin."

An honest outburst of regret and sorrow broke from the assembly, who eagerly pressed for an explanation of this calamitous change.

"The thing is this," said Billy. "If a man is a creature of mere leisure and amusement, the fine arts, — and by the fine arts I mean music, paintin', and the ladies, — is an elegant and very refined subject of cultivation; but when you raise your cerebral faculties to grander and loftier considerations, to explore the difficult ragions of polemic or political truth, to investigate the subtleties of the schools, and penetrate the mysteries of science, then, take my word for it, the fine arts is just snares — devil a more than snares! And whether it is soft sounds seduces you, or elegant tints, or the union of both — women I mane — you'll never arrive at anything great or tri-umphant till you wane yourself away from the likes of them vanities. Look at the haythen mythology; consider for a moment who is the chap that represents music — a lame blaguard, with an ugly face, they call Pan. Ay, indeed, Pan. If you wanted to see what respect they had for the art, it's easy enough to guess, when this crayture represints it; and as to 'vaintin,' on my conscience they

haven't a god at all that ever took to the brush."

"Pass up the sperits, Mickey," said he, somewhat blown and out of breath by this effort; "maybe," said he, "I'm wearyin' you."

"No, no, no," loudly responded the meeting.

"Maybe I'm imposing too much of personal details on the house," added he pompously.

"Not at all; never a bit," cried the company.

"Because," resumed he slowly, "if I did so, I'd have at least the excuse of saying, like the great Pitt, 'These may be my last words from this place.'"

An unfeigned murmur of sorrow ran through the meeting, and he resumed.

"Ay, ladies and gentlemine, Billy Traynor is takin' his 'farewell benefit;' he's not humbuggin'; I'm not like them chaps that's always positively goin', but stays on at the unanimous request of the whole world. No; I'm really goin' to leave you."

"What for? Where to, Billy?" broke from a number of voices together.

"I'll tell ye," said he; "at least so far as I can tell; because it would n't be right nor decent to 'print the whole of the papers for the house,' as they say in parliament. I'm going abroad with the young lord; we are going to improve our minds, and cultivate our januises, by study and foreign travel. We are first to settle in Germany, where we're to enter a University, and commence a coorse of modern tongues, French, Swedish, and Spanish; imbibin' at the same time a smatterin' of science, such as chemistry, conchology, and the use of the globes."

"O dear! O dear!" murmured the meeting in wonder and admiration.

"I'm not goin' to say that we'll neglect mechanics, metaphysics, and astrology; for we mane to be cosmonopolists in knowledge. As for myself, ladies and gentlemine, it's a proud day that sees me standin' here to say these words. I, that was ragged, without a shoe to my foot, without breeches; never mind, I was, as the poet says, *nudus nummis ac vestimentis* —

"I have n't six-pence in my pack,  
I have n't small clothes to my back."

"Carryin' the bag many a weary mile, through sleet and snow, for six pounds tin per annum, and no pinsion for wounds or superannuation — and now I'm to be — it is n't easy to say what — to the young lord, a species of humble companion, not manial, do you mind, nothing manial. What the Latins called a *famulus*, which was quite a different



thing from a *servus*. The former bein' a kind of domestic adviser, a deputy-assistant, monitor-general, as a body might say. There now, if I discoarsed for a month I could n't tell you more about myself and my future prospects. I own to you, that I'm proud of my good look ; and I would n't exchange it to be Emperor of Jamaica, or King of the Bahamia Islands."

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## CHAPTER XIX.

## THE CASCINE AT FLORENCE.

It was spring, and in Italy; one of those half-dozen days at very most, when, the feeling of winter departed, a gentle freshness breathes through the air; trees stir softly, and as if by magic; the earth becomes carpeted with flowers, whose odors seem to temper, as it were, the exciting atmosphere. An occasional cloud, fleecy and jagged, sails lazily aloft, marking its shadow on the mountain side. In a few days—a few hours perhaps—the blue sky will be unbroken, the air hushed, a hot breath will move among the leaves, or pant over the trickling fountain.

In this fast-flitting period, we dare not call it season, the Cascine of Florence is singularly beautiful: on one side, the gentle river stealing past beneath the shadowing foliage; on the other, the picturesque mountains towards Fiesole, dotted with its palaces and terraced gardens. The ancient city itself is partly seen, and the massive Duomo and the Palazzo Vecchio tower proudly above the trees! What other people of Europe have such a haunt?—what other people would know so thoroughly how to enjoy it? The day was drawing to a close, and the Piazzone was now filled with equipages. There were the representatives of every European people, and of nations far away over the seas—splendid Russians, brilliant French, splenetic, supercilious English, and ponderous Germans, mingled with the less marked nationalities of Belgium and Holland, and even America. Everything that called itself Fashion was there to swell the tide; and although a choice military band was performing with exquisite skill the favorite overtures of the day, the noise and tumult of conversation almost drowned their notes. For the Cascine is to the world of society what the Bourse is to the world of trade. It is the great centre of all news and intelligence, where markets and bargains of intercourse are transacted, and where the scene of past pleasure is revived, and the plans of future enjoyment are canvassed. The great and the wealthy are there, to see and to meet with each other. Their proud equipages lie side by side, like great liners; while phaetons, like fast frigates, shoot swiftly by, and solitary dandies flit past in varieties of conveyance to which sea-craft can offer no analogies. All are busy, eager and occupied. Scandal holds here its festival, and the misdeeds of every capital of Europe are now being discussed. The higher themes of politics occupy but few: the interests of literature attract still less. It is essentially of the world they talk, and it must be owned they do it like adepts. The

last witticism of Paris—the last duel at Berlin—who has fled from his creditors in England—who has run away from her husband at Naples—are all retailed with a serious circumstantiality that would lead one to believe that gossip maintained its “own correspondent” in every city of the Continent. Moralists might fancy, perhaps, that in the tone these subjects are treated, there would mingle a reprobation of the bad, and a due estimate of the opposite, if it ever occurred at all; but as surely would they be disappointed. Never were censors more lenient—never were critics so charitable. The transgressions against good breeding—the “gaucheries” of manner—the solecisms in dress, language, or demeanor, do indeed meet with sharp reproof and cutting sarcasm; but in recompense for such severity, how gently they deal with graver offences. For the felonies they can always discover “the attenuating circumstances;” for the petty larcenies of fashion they have nothing but whipcord.

Amidst the various knots where such discussions were carried on, one was eminently conspicuous. It was around a handsome, open carriage, whose horses, harnessing, and liveries were all in the most perfect taste. The equipage might possibly have been deemed showy in Hyde Park; but in the Bois de Boulogne, or the Cascine, it must be pronounced the acmé of elegance. Whatever might have been the differences of national opinion on this point, there could assuredly have been none as to the beauty of those who occupied it.

Though a considerable interval of years divided them, the aunt and her niece had a wonderful resemblance to each other. They were both—that rarest of all forms of beauty—blond Italians; that is, with light hair and soft, grey eyes. They had a certain tint of skin, deeper and mellow than we see in northern lands, and an expression of mingled seriousness and softness that only pertains to the south of Europe. There was a certain coquetry in the similarity of their dress, which in many parts was precisely alike; and although the niece was but fifteen, and the aunt twenty-seven, it needed not the aid of flattery to make many mistake one for the other.

Beauty, like all the other “Beaux Arts,” has its distinctions. The same public opinion that enthrones the sculptor or the musician, confers its crown on female loveliness—and by this acclaim were they declared Queens of Beauty. To any one visiting Italy for the first time, there would have seemed something very strange in the sort of homage rendered them: a reverence and respect only accorded elsewhere to royalities—a deference



that verged on actual humiliation — and yet all this blended with a subtle familiarity that none but an Italian can ever attain to. The uncovered head, the attitude of respectful attention, the patient expectancy of notice, the glad air of him under recognition, were all there; and yet, through these, there was dashed a strange tone of intimacy, as as though the observances were but a thin crust over deeper feelings. “*La Comtessa*” — for she was especially “the Countess,” as one illustrious man of our own country was “the Duke” — possessed every gift which claims pre-eminence in this fair city. She was eminently beautiful, young, charming in her manners, with ample fortune; and, lastly — ah! good reader, you would surely be puzzled to supply that lastly, *thé* more as we say that in it lies an excellence without which all the rest are of little worth, and yet with it are objects of worship, almost of adoration — she was separated from her husband! There must have been an epidemic, a kind of rot among husbands at one period; for we scarcely remember a very pretty woman, from five-and-twenty to five-and-thirty, who had not been obliged to leave hers from acts of cruelty, or acts of brutality, etc. that only husbands are capable of, or of which their poor wives are ever the victims.

If the moral Geography of Europe be ever written, the region south of the Alps will certainly be colored with that tint, whatever it be, that describes the blessedness of a divorced existence. In other lands, especially in our own, the separated individual labors under no common difficulty in his advances to society. The story — there must be a story — of his separation is told in various ways — all, of course, to his disparagement. Tyrant or victim, it is hard to say under which title he comes out best — so much for the man; but for the woman there is no plea; judgment is pronounced at once, without the merits. Fugitive, or fled from — who inquires? she is one that few men dare to recognize. The very fact that to mention her name exacts an explanation, is condemnatory. What a boon to all such must it be that there is a climate mild enough for their malady, and a country that will suit their constitution; and not only that, but a region which actually pays homage to their infirmity, and makes of their martyrdom a triumph! As you go to Norway for salmon fishing — to Bengal to hunt tigers — to St. Petersburg to eat caviare, so when divorced, if you would really know the blessing of your state, go take a house on the Arno. Vast as are the material resources of our globe, the moral ones are infinitely greater; nor need we despair, some day or other, of finding an island where a certificate of fraudulent bankruptcy

will be deemed a letter of credit, and an evidence of insolvency be accepted as qualification to start a bank.

*La Comtessa* inhabited a splendid palace, furnished with magnificence; her gardens were one of the sights of the capital, not only for their floral display, but that they contained a celebrated group by Canova, of which no copy existed. Her gallery was, if not extensive, enriched with some priceless treasure of art; and with all these she possessed high rank, for her card bore the name of *La Comtesse de Glencore*, née *Comtesse della Torre*.

The reader thus knows at once, if not actually, as much as we do ourselves, all that we mean to impart to him; and now let us come back to that equipage around which swarmed the fashion of Florence, eagerly pressing forward to catch a word, a smile, or even a look; and actually perched on every spot from which they could obtain a glimpse of those within. A young Russian prince, with his arm in a sling, had just recited the incident of his late duel; a Neapolitan minister had delivered a rose-colored epistle from a Royal Highness of his own court. A Spanish grandee had deposited his offering of camelias, which actually covered the front cushions of the carriage; and now a little lane was formed for the approach of the old Duke de Bregnoles, who made his advance with a mingled courtesy and haughtiness that told of Versailles and long ago.

A very creditable specimen of the old noblesse of France was the Duke, and well worthy to be the grandson of one who was Grand Marechal to Louis XIV. Tall, thin, and slightly stooped from age; his dark eye seemed to glisten the brighter beneath his shaggy, white eyebrows. He had served with distinction as a soldier, and been an ambassador at the court of the Czar Paul; in every station he had filled sustaining the character of a true and loyal gentleman — a man who could reflect nothing but honor on the great country he belonged to. It was amongst the scandal of Florence that he was the most devoted of *la Comtessa's* admirers; but we are quite willing to believe that his admiration had nothing in it of love. At all events, she distinguished him by her most marked notice. He was the frequent guest of her choicest dinners, and the constant visitor at her evenings at home. It was then with a degree of favor that many an envious heart coveted, she extended her hand to him as he came forward, which he kissed with all the lowly deference he would have shown to that of his Prince.

“*Mon cher Duc*,” said she, smiling, “I have such a share of grievances to lay at

your door. The essence of violets is not violets, but verbenas."

"Charming Comtesse, I had it direct from Pierrot's."

"Pierrot is a traitor, then; that's all; and where's Ida's Arab, is he to be here to-day, or to-morrow? When are we to see him?"

"Why, I only wrote to the Emir on Tuesday last."

"Mais a quoi bon l'Emir if he can't do impossibilities? Surely the very thought of him brings up the Arabian Nights, and the Calif Haroun. By the way, thank you for the poignard. It is true Damascus; is it not?"

"Of course. I'd not have dared —"

"To be sure not. I told the Arch-duchess it was. I wore it in my Turkish dress on Wednesday, and you, false man, would n't come to admire me!"

"You know what a sad day was that for me, madam," said he, solemnly. "It was the anniversary of her fate who was your only rival in beauty as she had no rival in undeserved misfortunes."

"Pauvre Reine!" sighed the Countess, and held her bouquet to her face.

"What great mass of papers is that you have there, Duke?" resumed she. "Can it be a journal?"

"It is an English newspaper, my dear Countess. As I know you do not receive any of his countrymen, I have not asked your permission to present the Lord Selby; but hearing him read out your name in a paragraph here, I carried off his paper to have it translated for me. You read English, don't you?"

"Very imperfectly; and I detest it," said she, impatiently; "but Prince Volkoffsky can, I am sure, oblige you;" and she turned away her head in ill-humor.

"It is here somewhere. *Parbleu*, I thought I marked the place," muttered the Duke, as he handed the paper to the Russian. "Is n't that it?"

"This is all about theatres, Madame Pasta, and the Haymarket."

"Ah! well, it is lower down: here, perhaps."

"Court news. The Grand Duke of Saxe Weimar."

"No, no: not that."

"O, here it is. 'Great Scandal in High Life — A very singular correspondence has just passed, and will soon, we believe, be made public, between the Herald's College and Lord Glencore.'" Here the reader stopped, and lowered his voice at the next word.

"Read on, Prince. *C'est mon mari*," said she coldly, while a very slight move-

ment of her upper lip betrayed what might mean scorn or sorrow, or even both.

The Prince, however, had now run his eyes over the paragraph, and crushing the newspaper in his hand, hurried away from the spot. The Duke as quickly followed, and soon overtook him.

"Who gave you this paper, Duke?" cried the Russian, angrily.

"It was Lord Selby. He was reading it aloud to a friend."

"Then he is an *infame*, and I'll tell him so," cried the other passionately. "Which is he? the one with the light moustache, or the shorter one?" and without waiting for reply, the Russian dashed between the carriages, and thrusting his way through the prancing crowd of moving horses, arrived at a spot where two young men, evidently strangers to the scene, were standing calmly surveying the bright panorama before them.

"The Lord Selby," said the Russian, taking off his hat and saluting one of them.

"That's his lordship," replied the one he addressed, pointing to his friend.

"I am the Prince Volkoffsky, Aid-de-Camp to the Emperor," said the Russian; "and hearing from my friend, the Duke de Bregnoles, that you have just given him this newspaper, that he might obtain the translation of a passage in it which concerns Lady Glencore, and have the explanation read out at her own carriage, publicly, before all the world, I desire to tell you that your lordship is unworthy of your rank — an *infame*! and if you do not resent this — a *polisson*!"

"This man is mad, Selby," said the short man, with the coolest air imaginable.

"Quite sane enough to give your friend a lesson in good manners; and you too, sir, if you have any fancy for it," said the Russian.

"I'd give him in charge to the police, by Jove, if there were police here," said the same one who spoke before; "he can't be a gentleman."

"There's my card, sir," said the Russian.

"and for you too, sir," said he, presenting another to him who spoke.

"Where are you to be heard of?" said the short man.

"At the Russian legation," said the Prince, haughtily, and turned away.

"You're wrong, Baynton, he is a gentleman," said Lord Selby, as he pocketed the card, "though certainly he is not a very mild tempered specimen of his order."

"You didn't give the newspaper as he said —"

"Nothing of the kind. I was reading it aloud to you when the royal carriages came



suddenly past; and, in taking off my hat to salute, I never noticed that the old Duke had carried off the paper. I know he can't read English, and the chances are, he has asked this Scythian gentleman to interpret for him."

"So then the affair is easily settled," said the other, quietly.

"Of course it is," was the answer; and they both lounged about among the carriages, which already were thinning, and, after a while, set out towards the city.

They had but just reached their hotel when a stranger presented himself to them as the Count de Marny. He had come as the friend of Prince Volkofsky, who had fully explained to him the event of that afternoon.

"Well," said Baynton, "we are of opinion your friend has conducted himself exceedingly ill, and we are here to receive his excuses."

"I am afraid, messieurs," said the Frenchman, bowing, "that it will exhaust your patience if you continue to wait for them. Might it not be better to come and accept what he is quite prepared to offer you—satisfaction?"

"Be it so," said Lord Selby: "he'll see his mistake some time or other, and perhaps regret it. Where shall it be?—and when?"

"At the Fossombroni, Villa, about two miles from this. To-morrow morning, at eight, if that suit you."

"Quite well. I have no other appointment. Pistols, of course?"

"You have the choice, otherwise my friend would have preferred the sword."

"Take him at his word, Selby," whispered Baynton; "you are equal to any of them with the rapier."

"If your friend desire the sword, I have no objection—I mean the rapier."

"The rapier be it," said the Frenchman; and with a polite assurance of the infinite honor he felt in forming their acquaintance, and the gratifying certainty they were sure to possess of his highest considerations, he bowed, backed, and withdrew.

"Well mannered fellow, the Frenchman," said Baynton, as the door closed; and the other nodded assent, and rang the bell for dinner.

#### CHAPTER XX.

##### THE VILLA FOSSOMBRONI.

THE grounds of the Villa Fossombroni were, at the time we speak of, the Chalk Farm, or the Fifteen Acres of Tuscany. The Villa itself, long since deserted by the illustrious family whose name it bore, had fallen into the hands of an old Piedmontese noble, ruined by a long life of excess and dissipa-

tion. He had served with gallantry in the imperial army of France, but was dismissed the service for a play transaction, in which his conduct was deeply disgraceful; and the Colonel Count Tasseroni, of the 8th Hussars of the Guards, was declared unworthy to wear the uniform of a Frenchman.

For a number of years he had lived so estranged from the world, that many believed he had died; but at last it was known that he had gone to reside in a half-ruined villa near Florence, which soon became the resort of a certain class of gamblers, whose habits would have speedily attracted notice if practised within the city. The quarrels and altercations, so inseparable from high play, were usually settled on the spot in which they occurred, until at last the Villa became famous for these meetings, and the name of Fossombroni, in a discussion, was the watch-word for a duel.

It was of a splendid spring morning that the two Englishmen arrived at this spot—which, even on the unpleasant errand that they had come, struck them with surprise and admiration. The Villa itself was one of those vast structures which the country about Florence abounds in. Gloomy, stern, and gaol-like without; while within splendid apartments open into each other, in what seems an endless succession. Frescoed walls, and gorgeously ornamented ceilings, gilded mouldings, and rich tracery are on every side, and these, too, in chambers where the immense proportions and the vast space recall the idea of a royal residence. Passing in by a dilapidated grille which once had been richly gilded, they entered by a flight of steps a great hall which ran the entire length of the building. Though lighted by a double range of windows, neglect and dirt had so dimmed the panes, that the place was almost in deep shadow. Still they could perceive that the vaulted roof was a mass of stuccoed tracery, and that the colossal divisions of the walls were of brilliant Tierna marble. At one end of this great gallery was a small chapel, now partly despoiled of its religious decorations, which were most irreverently replaced by a variety of swords and sabres of every possible size and shape, and several pairs of pistols, arranged with an evident eye to picturesque grouping.

"What are all these inscriptions here on the walls, Baynton?" cried Selby, as he stood endeavoring to decypher the lines on a little marble slab, a number of which were dotted over the chapel.

"Strange enough this, by Jove," muttered the other, reading to himself, half aloud—"Francisco Ricordi, ucciso da Gieronimo Gazzi, 29 Settembre, 1828."

"What does that mean?" asked Selby.

"It is to commemorate some fellow who was killed here in '28."

"Are they all in the same vein?" asked the other.

"It would seem so. Here's one: 'gravamente ferito,' badly wounded, with a postscript that he died the same night."

"What's this large one here, in black marble?" inquired Selby.

"To the memory of Carlo Luigi Guiccidrini, 'detto il Carnefice,' called the slaughterer: cut down to the forehead by Pietro Baldasseroni, on the night of July 8th, 1829."

"I confess any other kind of literature would amuse me as well," said Selby, turning back again into the large hall. Baynton had scarcely joined him when they saw, advancing towards them through the gloom, a short, thick-set man, dressed in much-worn dressing-gown and slippers. He removed his skull-cap as he approached, and said — "The Count Tasseroni, at your orders."

"We have come here by appointment," said Baynton.

"Yes, yes. I know it all. Volkoffsky sent me word. He was here on Saturday. He gave that French colonel a sharp lesson. Ran the sword clean through the chest. To be sure he was wounded too, but only through the arm; but 'La Marque' has got his passport."

"You'll have him up there soon, then," said Baynton, pointing towards the chapel.

"I think not. We have not done it latterly," said the Count, musingly. "The authorities, don't seem to like it; and, of course, we respect the authorities!"

"That's quite evident," said Baynton, who turned to translate the observation to his friend.

Selby whispered a word in his ear.

"What does the signore say?" inquired the Count.

"My friend thinks that they are behind the time."

"Per Baccho! Let him be easy as to that. I have known some to think that the Russian came to soon. I never heard of one who wished him earlier! There they are now: they always come by the garden;" and so saying, he hastened off to receive them.

"How is this fellow to handle a sword, if his right arm be wounded?" said Selby.

"Don't you know that these Russians use the left hand indifferently with the right, in all exercises? It may be awkward for you; but, depend upon it, he'll not be inconvenienced in the least."

As he spoke, the others entered the other end of the hall. The Prince no sooner saw the Englishmen, than he advanced towards them with his hat off. "My Lord," said he rapidly, "I have come to make you an apol-

ogy, and one which I trust you will accept in all the frankness that I offer it. I have learned, from your friend, the Duc de Bregnoles, how the incident of yesterday occurred. I see that the only fault committed was my own. Will you pardon, then, a mementary word of ill-temper, occasioned by what I wrongfully believed a great injury?"

"Of course, I knew it was all a mistake on your part. I told Colonel Baynton here, you'd see so yourself — when it was too late, perhaps."

"I thank you sincerely," said the Russian, bowing; "your readiness to accord me this satisfaction makes your forgiveness more precious to me; and now, as another favor, will you permit me to ask you one question?"

"Yes, certainly."

"Why, when you could have so easily explained the misconception on my part, did you not take the trouble of doing so?"

Selby looked confused, blushed, looked awkwardly from side to side, and then with a glance towards his friend, seemed to say, "Will you try and answer him?"

"I think you have hit it yourself, Prince," said Baynton. "It was the trouble — the bore of an explanation, deterred him. He hates writing, and he thought there would be a shower of notes to be replied to, meetings, discussions, and what not; and so he said, 'Let him have his shot, and have done with it.'"

The Russian looked from one to the other, as he listened, and seemed really as if not quite sure whether this speech was uttered in seriousness or sarcasm. The calm, phlegmatic faces of the Englishmen — the almost apathetic expression they wore — soon convinced him that the words were truthfully spoken; and he stood actually confounded with amazement before them.

Lord Selby and his friend freely accepted the polite invitation of the Prince to breakfast, and they all adjourned to a small, but splendidly decorated room where everything was already awaiting them. There are few incidents in life which so much predispose to rapid intimacy as the case of an averted duel. The revulsion from animosity is almost certain to lead to, if not actual friendship, what may easily become so. In the present instance, the very diversities of national character gave a zest and enjoyment to the meeting; and while the Englishmen were charmed by the fascination of manners and conversational readiness of their hosts, the Russians were equally struck with a cool imperturbability and impassiveness, of which they had never seen the equal.

By degrees the Russian led the conversation



to the question by which their misunderstanding originated. "You know my Lord Glencore, perhaps?" said he.

"Never saw—scarcely ever heard of him," said Selby, in his dry, laconic tone.

"Is he mad or a fool?" asked the Prince, half angrily.

"I served in a regiment once where he commanded a troop," said Baynton; "and they always said he was good sort of fellow."

"You read that paragraph this morning, I conclude?" said the Russian. "You saw how he dares to stigmatize the honor of his wife—to degrade her to the rank of a mistress—and, at the same time, to bastardize the son who ought to inherit his rank and title?"

"I read it," said Selby drily; "and I had a letter from my lawyer about it this morning."

"Indeed!" exclaimed he, anxious to hear more, and yet too delicate to venture on a question.

"Yes; he writes to me for some title deeds or other. I did n't pay much attention, exactly, to what he says. Glencore's man of business had addressed a letter to him."

The Russian bowed, and waited for him to resume; but, apparently, he had rather fatigued himself by such unusual loquacity, and so he lay back in his chair, and puffed his cigar in indolent enjoyment.

"A goodish sort of thing for *you*, it ought to be," said Baynton, between the puffs of his tobacco-smoke, and with a look towards Selby.

"I suspect it may," said the other without the slightest change of tone or demeanor.

"Where is it—somewhere in the south?"

"Mostly Devon. There's something in Wales, too, if I remember aright."

"Nothing Irish?"

"No, thank Heaven—nothing Irish"—and his grim lordship made the nearest advance to a smile of which his unplastic features seemed capable.

"Do I understand you aright, my lord," said the Prince; "that you receive an accession of fortune by this event?"

"I shall; if I survive Glencore," was the brief reply.

"You are related, then?"

"Some cousinship—I forget how it is. Do you remember, Baynton?"

"I'm not quite certain. I think it was a Coventry married one of Jack Conway's sisters, and she afterwards became the wife of Sir Something Massy. Is n't that it?"

"Yes, that's it," muttered the other, in the tone of a man who was tired of a knotty problem.

"And, according to your laws, this Lord

Glencore may marry again?" cried the Russian.

"I should think so, if he has no wife living," said Selby; "but, I trust, for *my* sake, he'll not."

"And what if he should, and should be discovered the wedded husband of another?"

"That would be bigamy," said Selby.

"Would they hang him, Baynton?"

"I think not—scarcely," rejoined the Colonel.

The Prince tried in various ways to obtain some insight into Lord Glencore's habits, his tastes, and mode of life, but all in vain. They knew, indeed, very little, but even that little they were too indolent to repeat. Lord Selby's memory was often at fault, too, and Baynton's had ill supplied the deficiency. Again and again did the Russian mutter curses to himself, over the impassive apathy of these stony islanders. At moments he fancied that they suspected his eagerness, and had assumed their most guarded caution against him; but he soon perceived that this manner was natural to them, not prompted in the slightest degree by any distrust whatever.

After all, thought the Russian, how can I hope to stimulate a man who is not excited by his own increase of fortune? Talk of Turkish fatalism—these fellows would shame the Moslem.

"Do you mean to prolong your stay at Florence, my lord?" asked the Prince, as they arose from table.

"I scarcely know. What do you say, Baynton?"

"A week or so, I fancy," muttered the other.

"And then on to Rome, perhaps?"

The two Englishmen looked at each other with an air of as much confusion as if subjected to a searching examination in science.

"Well, I should n't wonder," said Selby at last, with a sigh.

"Yes, it may come to that," said Baynton like a man who had just overcome a difficulty.

"You'll be in time for the Holy week and all the ceremonies," said the Prince.

"Mind that, Baynton," said his lordship, who was n't going to carry what he felt to be another man's load; and Baynton nodded acquiescence.

"And after that comes the season for Naples—you have a month or six weeks, perhaps, of such weather as nothing in all Europe can vie with."

"You hear, Baynton?" said Selby.

"I've booked it," muttered the other, and so they took leave of their entertainer, and set out towards Florence. Neither you nor

I, dear reader, will gain anything by keeping them company, for they say scarce a word by the way. They stop at intervals, and cast their eyes over the glorious landscape at their feet. Their glances are thrown over the fairest scene of the fairest of all lands; and whether they turn towards the snow-capt Apennines, by Vall'ombrosa, or trace the sunny vineyards along the Vall' d'Arno, they behold a picture such as no canvass ever imitated; still they are mute and uncommunicative. Whatever of pleasure their thoughts suggest, each keeps for himself. Objects of wonder, strange sights and new, may present themselves, but they are not to be startled out of national dignity by so ignoble a sentiment as surprise. And so they jog onward—doubtless richer in reflection than eloquent in communion—and so we leave them.

Let us not be deemed unjust or ungenerous, if we assert that we have met many such as these. They are not individuals—they are a class—and, strange enough too, a class which almost invariable pertains to a high and distinguished rank in society. It would be presumptuous to ascribe such demeanor to insensibility. There is enough in their general conduct to disprove the assumption. As little is it affectation; it is simply an acquired habit of stoical indifference, supposed to be—why, Heaven knows!—the essential ingredient of the best breeding. If the practice extinguish all emotion and obliterate all trace of feeling from the heart, we deplore the system. If it only gloss over the working of human sympathy, we pity the men. At all events, they are very uninteresting company, with whom longer dalliance would only be wearisome.

## CHAPTER XXI.

## SOME TRAITS OF LIFE.

It was the night Lady Glencore received; and, as usual, the street was crowded with equipages, which somehow seemed to have got into inextricable confusion—some endeavoring to turn back, while others pressed forward—and the court of the palace being closely packed with carriages, which the thronged street held in fast blockade. As the apartments which faced the street were not ever used for these receptions, the dark, unlighted windows suggested no remark; but they who had entered the court-yard were struck by the gloomy aspect of the vast building; not only that the entrance and the stairs were in darkness, but the whole suite of rooms, usually brilliant as the day, were now in deep gloom. From every carriage-window heads were protruded, wondering at this strange spectacle, and eager

inquiries pressed on every side for an explanation. The expression of sudden illness was rapidly disseminated, but as rapidly contradicted, and the reply given by the porter to all demands quickly repeated from mouth to mouth, "Her ladyship will not receive."

"Can no one explain this mystery?" cried the old Princess Borinsky—as, heavy with fat and diamonds, she hung out of her carriage-window—"O, there's Major Scaresby; he is certain to know, if it be anything malicious."

Scaresby was, however, too busy in recounting his news to others to perceive the signals the old Princess held out; and it was only as her chasseur, six feet three of green and gold, bent down to give her highness' message, that the Major hurried off, in all the importance of a momentary scandal, to the side of the carriage.

"Here I am, all impatience. What is it, Scaresby?—tell me quickly," cried she.

"A smash, my dear Princess—nothing more or less," said he, in a voice which nature seemed to have invented to utter impertinence; so harsh and grating, and yet so painfully distinct in all its accents,—"as complete a smash as ever I heard of."

"You can't mean that her fortune is in peril?"

"I suppose that must suffer also. It is her character—her station as one of us—that's shipwrecked here."

"Go on, go on," cried she, impatiently; "I wish to hear it all."

"All is very briefly related, then," said he. "The charming Countess, you remember, ran away with a countryman of mine, young Glencore, of the 8th Hussars; I used to know his father intimately."

"Never mind his father."

"That's exactly what Glencore did. He came over here and fell in love with the girl, and they ran off together, but they forgot to get married, Princess. Ha—ha—ha—" and he laughed with a cackle a demon could not have rivalled.

"I don't believe a word of it—I'll never believe it," cried the Princess.

"That's exactly what I was recommending to the Marquesa Guستنi. I said you needn't believe it. Why, how do we go anywhere, now-a-days, except by not believing the evil stories that are told of our entertainers?"

"Yes, yes; but I repeat that this is an infamous calumny. She, a Countess, of a family second to none in all Italy; her father a Grand d'Espagne. I'll go to her this moment."

"She'll not see you. She has just refused to see La Genosi," said the Major, tartly. "Though, if a cracked reputation might



have afforded any sympathy, she might have admitted *her*."

"What is to be done!" exclaimed the Princess, sorrowfully.

"Just what you suggested a few moments ago. Don't believe it. Hang me, but good houses and good cooks are growing too scarce to make one credulous of the ills that can be said of the owners."

"I wish I knew what course to take," muttered the Princess.

"I'll tell you then. Get half a dozen of your own set together to-morrow morning, vote the whole story an atrocious falsehood, and go in a body and tell the Countess your mind. You know as well as I, Princess, that social credit is as great a bubble as commercial; we should all of us be bankrupts if our books were seen. Aye, by Jove, and the similitude goes further, too—for, when one old established house smashes, there is generally a crash in the whole community; ha, ha, ha!"

While they thus talked, a knot had gathered around the carriage, all eager to hear what opinion the Princess had formed on the catastrophe.

Various were the sentiments expressed by the different speakers; some sorrowfully deploring the disaster, others more eagerly inveighing against the infamy of the man who had proclaimed it. Many declared that they had come to the determination to discredit the story. Not one, however, sincerely professed that he disbelieved it.

Can it be, as the French moralist asserts, that we have a latent sense of satisfaction in the misfortunes of even our best friends; or is it, as we rather suspect, that true friendship is a rarer thing than is commonly believed, and has little to do with those conventional intimacies which so often bear its name?

Assuredly, of all this well-bred, well-dressed, and well-born company, now thronging the court-yard of the palace and the street in front of it, the tone was as much sarcasm as sorrow, and many a witty epigram and smart speech were launched over a disaster which might have been spared such levity. At length the space began to thin. Slowly carriage after carriage drove off—the heaviest grief of their occupants often being over a lost *soirée*—an unprofitable occasion to display toilette and jewels—while a few, more reflective, discussed what course was to be followed in future, and what recognition extended to the victim.

The next day Florence sat in committee over the lost Countess. Witnesses were heard and evidence taken as to her case. They all agreed it was a great hardship—a

terrible infliction—but still, if true, what could be done?

Never was there a society less ungenerously prudish, and yet there were cases—this one of them—which transgressed all conventional rule. Like a crime which no statute had ever contemplated, it stood out self-accused and self-condemned. A few might, perhaps, have been merciful, but they were overborne by numbers. Lady Glencore's beauty and her vast fortune were now counts in the indictment against her, and many a jealous rival was not sorry at this hour of humiliation. The despotism of beauty is not a very mild sway after all, and, perhaps, the Countess had exercised her rule right royally. At all events, it was the young and the good-looking who voted her exclusion, and only those who could not enter into competition with her charms who took the charitable side. They discussed and debated the question all day; but, while they hesitated over the reprieve, the prisoner was beyond the law. The gate of the palace, locked and barred all day, refused entrance to every one; at night it opened to admit the exit of a travelling carriage. The next morning large bills of sale, posted over the walls, declared that all the furniture and decorations were to be sold.

The Countess had left Florence—none knew whither.

"I must really have those large Sevres jars," said one; "and I the small park phaeton," cried another.

"I hope she has not taken Horace with her; he was the best cook in Italy. Splendid hock she had, and I wonder is there much of it left."

"I wish we were certain of another bad reputation to replace her," grunted out Scareby; "they are the only kind of people who give good dinners, and never ask for returns."

And thus these dear friends—guests of a hundred brilliant *fêtes*—discussed the fall of her they once had worshipped.

It may seem small-minded and narrow to stigmatize such conduct as this. Some may say that for the ordinary courtesies of society no pledges of friendship are required, no real gratitude incurred. Be it so. Still the revulsion from habits of deference and respect to disparagement, and even sarcasm, is a sorry evidence of human kindness; and the threshold, over which for years we had only passed as guests, might well suggest sadder thoughts as we tread it to behold desolation.

The fair Countess had been the celebrity of that city for many a day. The stranger of distinction sought her as much a matter

of course as he sought presentation to the sovereign. Her salons had the double eminence of brilliancy in rank and brilliancy in wit; her entertainments were cited as models of elegance and refinement, and now she was gone! The extreme of regret that followed her was the sorrow of those who were to dine there no more; the grief of him who thought he shall never have a house like it.

The respectable vagabonds of society are a large family, much larger than is usually supposed. They are often well born, almost always well mannered, invariably well dressed. They do not, at first blush, appear to discharge any very great or necessary function in life, but we must by no means from that infer their inutility. Naturalists tell us that several varieties of insect existence we rashly set down as mere annoyances, have their peculiar spheres of usefulness and good; and, doubtless, these same loungers contribute in some mysterious manner to the welfare of that state which they only seem to burden. We are told that but for flies, for instance, we should be infested with myriads of winged tormentors, insinuating themselves into our meat and drink, and rendering life miserable. Is there not something very similar performed by the respectable class I allude you? Are they not invariably devouring and destroying some vermin a little smaller than themselves, and making thus a healthier atmosphere for their betters? If good society only knew the debt it owes to these defenders of its privileges, a Vagabond's Home and Aged Asylum would speedily figure amongst our national charities.

We have been led to these thoughts by observing how distinctly different was Major Scaresby's tone in talking of the Countess, when he addressed his betters or spoke in his

own class. To the former he gave vent to all his sarcasm and bitterness; they liked it just because they would n't condescend to it themselves. To his own he put on the bullying air of one who said, "How should you possibly know what vices such great people have, any more than you know what they have for dinner? *I* live amongst them — *I* understand them — *I* am aware that what would be very shocking in *you* is quite permissible to *them*. *They* know how to be wicked — *you* only know how to be gross;" and thus Scaresby talked, and sneered, and scoffed, making such a hash of good and evil, such a Maelstrom of right and wrong, that it were a subtle moralist who could have extracted one solitary scrap of uncontinuated meaning from all his muddy lucubrations.

He, however, effected this much: he kept the memory of her who had gone, alive by daily calumnies. He embalmed her in poisons, each morning appearing with some new trait of her extravagance — her losses in her caprice — 'till the world, grown sick of himself and his theme, vowed they would hear no more of either, and so she was forgotten.

Aye, good reader, utterly forgotten! The gay world, for so it likes to be called, has no greater element of enjoyment amongst all its high gifts than its precious power of forgetting. It forgets not only all it owes to others — gratitude, honor, and esteem — but even the closer obligations it has contracted with itself. The Palazzo della Torre was for a fortnight the resort of the curious and the idle. At the sale crowds appeared to secure some object of especial value to each; and then the gates were locked, the shutters closed, and a large, ill-written notice on the door announced that any letters for the proprietor were to be addressed to "Pietro Arretini, Via del Sole."



## CHAPTER XXII.

## AN UPTONIAN DESPATCH.

## "BRITISH LEGATION, NAPLES.

"My dear Harcourt, — It would seem that a letter of mine to you must have miscarried, a not unfrequent occurrence when entrusted to our Foreign Office for transmission. Should it ever reach you, you will perceive how unjustly you have charged me with neglecting your wishes. I have ordered the Sicilian wine for your friend. I have obtained the Royal leave for you to shoot in Calabria; and I assure you, it is rather a rare incident in my life to have forgotten nothing required of me! Perhaps you, who know me well, will do me this justice, and be the more grateful for my present promptitude.

"It was quite a mistake sending me here; for anything there is to be done, Spencer or Lonsdale would perfectly suffice. I ought to have gone to Vienna; and so they know at home — but it's the old game played over again. Important questions! why, my dear friend, there is not a matter between this country and our own that rises above the capacity of a colonel of dragoons. Meanwhile, really great events are preparing in the East of Europe — not that I am going to inflict them upon you, nor ask you to listen to speculations which even they in authority turn a deaf ear to.

"It is very kind of you to think of my health. I am still a sufferer, the old pains rather aggravated than relieved by this climate. You are aware that, though warm, the weather here has some exciting property, some excess or other of a peculiar gas in the atmosphere, prejudicial to certain temperaments. I feel it greatly, and though the season is midsummer, I am obliged to dress entirely in a light costume of buckskin, and take Marsalla baths, which refresh me, at least, for the while. I have also taken to smoke the leaves of the *nux vomica* steeped in arrack, and think it agrees with me. The king has most kindly placed a little villa at Ischia at my disposal; but I do not mean to avail myself of the politeness. The Duke of San Giustino has also offered me his palace at Baia, but I don't fancy leaving this just now where there is a doctor, a certain Tommaso Buffeloni, who really seems to have hit off my case. He calls it arterial athritis, a kind of inflammatory action of one coat of the arterial system; his notion is highly ingenious, and wonderfully borne out by the symptoms. I wish you would ask Brodie, or any of our best men, whether they have met with this affection? what class it affects, and what course it usually takes? My Italian doctor implies, that it is the passing malady of men

highly excitable, and largely endowed with mental gifts. I think I can recognize the accuracy of this hypothesis. It is only nature makes the blunder of giving the sharpest swords the weakest scabbards — what a pity the weapon cannot be worn naked!

"You ask me if I like this place. I do, perhaps, as well as I should like anywhere. There is a wonderful sameness over the world just now, preluding, I have very little doubt, some great outburst of nationality for all the countries of Europe. Just as periods of Puritanism succeed intervals of gross licentiousness.

"Society here is, therefore, as you see it in London or Paris; well-bred people, like gold, are current everywhere. There is really little peculiar to observe. I don't perceive that there is more levity than elsewhere. The difference is, perhaps, that there is less shame about it since it is under the protection of the Church.

"I go out very little: my notion is that the Diplomatist, like the ancient Augur, must not suffer himself to be vulgarized by contact. He can only lose, not gain, by that mixed intercourse with the world. I have a few who come when I want them, and go in like manner. They tell me what is going on far better and more truthfully than paid employés, and they cannot trace my intentions through my inquiries, and hasten off to retail them at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Of my colleagues I see as little as possible, though when we do meet, I feel an unbounded affection for them. So much for my life, dear Harcourt; on the whole, a very tolerable kind of existence, which if few would envy, still fewer would care to part with.

"I now come to the chief portion of your letter. — This boy of Glencore's, I rather like the account you give of him, better than you do yourself. Imaginative and *dreamy* he may be, but remember what he was, and where we have placed him. A moonstruck, romantic youth at a German University. Is it not painting the lily?

"I merely intended he should go to Göttingen to learn the language, always a difficulty if not abstracted from other and more dulcet sounds. I never meant to have him domesticated with some rusty *Hochgelehrter*, eating sauer kraut in company with a green-eyed *Fraulein*, and imbibing love and metaphysics together. Let him moon away, as you call it, my dear Harcourt. It is wonderfully little consequence what any one does with his intellect, till he be three or four-and twenty. Indeed I half suspect that the soil might be left quietly to rear weeds till that time, and as to dreaminess it signifies nothing if there be a strong physique.

With a weak frame, imagination will play the tyrant, and never cease till it dominate over all the other faculties; but where there is strength and activity, there is no fear of this.

"You amuse me with your account of the doctor; and so the Germans have actually taken him for a savant, and given him a degree 'honoris causa.' May they never make a worse blunder. The man is eminently remarkable, — with his opportunities, miraculous. I am certain, Harcourt, you never felt half the pleasure on arriving at a region well stocked with game, that he did on finding himself in a land of Libraries, Museums, and Collections. Fancy the poor fellow's ecstasy at being allowed to range at will through all ancient literature, of which hitherto a stray volume alone had reached him. Imagine his delight as each day opened new stores of knowledge to him, surrounded as he was by all that could encourage zeal and reward research. The boy's treatment of him pleases me much, it smacks of the gentle blood in his veins. Poor lad, there is something very sad in his case.

"You need not have taken such trouble about accounts and expenditure: of course, whatever you have done I perfectly approve of. You say that the boy has no idea of money or its value. There is both good and evil in this; and now as to his future. I should have no objection whatever to having him attached to my Legation here, and, perhaps, no great difficulty in effecting his appointment; but there is a serious obstacle in his position. The young men who figure at embassies and missions are all 'cognate numbers.' They each of them know who and what the other is, whence he came, and so on. Now our poor boy could not stand this ordeal, nor would it be fair he should be exposed to it. Besides this, it was never Glencore's wish, but the very opposite to it, that he should be brought prominently forward in life. He even suggested one of the colonies as the means of withdrawing him at once, and forever, from public gaze.

"You have interested me much by what you say of the boy's progress. His tastes, I infer, lie in the direction which, in a wordly sense, are least profitable; but after all, Harcourt, every one has brains enough, and to spare, for any career. Let us only decide upon that one most fitted for him, and depend upon it, his faculties will day by day conform to his duties, and his tastes be merely dissipations, just as play or wine is to coarser natures.

"If you really press the question of his coming to me, I will not refuse, seeing that I can take my own time to consider what steps subsequently should be adopted. How

is it that you know nothing of Glencore — can he not be traced?

"Lord Selby, whom you may remember in the Blues formerly, dined here yesterday, and mentioned a communication he had received from his lawyer, with regard to some property in tail; which, if Glencore should leave no heir male, devolved upon him. I tried to find out the whereabouts and the amount of this heritage; but with the admirable indifference that characterizes him, he did not know or care.

"As to my Lady, I can give you no information whatever; her house at Florence is uninhabited; the furniture is sold off; but no one seems to guess even whither she has betaken herself. The fast and loose of that pleasant city are, as I hear, actually houseless since her departure. No asylum open there with fire and cigars. A number of the destitute have come down here in half despair, amongst the rest, Seratchly — Major Seratchly, an insupportable nuisance of flat stories and stale gossip; one of those fellows who cannot make even malevolence amusing, and who speak ill of their neighbors without a single spark of wit. He has left three cards upon me, each duly returned; but I am resolved that our interchange of courtesies shall proceed no further.

"I trust I have omitted nothing in reply to your last dispatch, except it be to say, that I look for you here about September, or earlier, if as convenient to you; you will, of course, write to me, however, meanwhile.

"Do not mention having heard from me at the clubs or in society. I am, as I have the right to be, on the sick list, and it is as well my rest should remain undisturbed.

"I wish you had any means of making it known, that the article in the Quarterly, on our Foreign relations is not mine. The newspapers have coolly assumed me to be the author, and of course I am not going to give them the éclat of a personal denial. The fellow who wrote it must be an ass; since had he known what he pretends, he had never revealed it. He who wants to bag his bird, Colonel, never bangs away at nothing. I have now completed a longer dispatch to you than I intend to address to the Noble Secretary at F. O., and am yours, very faithfully,

"HORACE UPTON.

"Whose Magnesia is it that contains essence of Bark? Tripley's or Chipley's, I think; find it out for me and send me a packet through the office; put up Fauchard's pamphlet with it, on Spain, and a small box of those new blisters, Mouches they are called; they are to be had at Atkinson's. I have got so accustomed to their stimulat-



ing power that I never write without one or two on my forehead. They tell me the cautery, if dexterously applied, is better; but I have not tried it."

## CHAPTER XXIII.

## THE TUTOR AND HIS PUPIL.

WE are not about to follow up the correspondence of Sir Horace, by detailing the reply which Harcourt sent, and all that thereupon ensued between them.

We pass over then some months of time, and arrive at the late autumn.

It is a calm, still morning; the sea, streaked with tinted shadows, is without a ripple; the ships of many nations that float on it are motionless; their white sails hung out to bleach; their ensigns drooping beside the masts. Over the summit of Vesuvius, for we are at Naples, a light blue cloud hangs, the solitary one in all the sky. A mild, plaintive song, the chant of some fishermen on the rocks, is the only sound, save the continuous hum of that vast city, which swells and falls at intervals.

Close beside the sea, seated on a rock, are two figures. One is that of a youth of some eighteen or nineteen years; his features, eminently handsome, wear an expression of gloomy pride, as in deep pre-occupation he gazes out over the bay; to all seeming, indifferent to the fair scene before him, and wrapped in his own sad thoughts. The other is a short, square-built, almost uncouth figure, overshadowed by a wide straw hat, which seems even to diminish his stature; a suit of black, wide and ample enough for one twice his size, gives something grotesque to an appearance to which his features contribute their share.

It is, indeed, a strange physiognomy, to which Celt and Calmuc seemed equally to contribute. The low over-hanging forehead; the intensely keen eye, sparkling with an almost imp-like drollery, are contrasted by a firmly compressed mouth, and a far-projecting under jaw, that imply sternness even to cruelty; a mass of waving black hair, that covers neck and shoulders, adds a species of savagery to a head, which assuredly has no need of such aid. Bent down over a large quarto volume, he never lifts his eyes; but, intently occupied, his lips are rapidly repeating the words as he reads them.

"Do you mean to pass the morning here?" asks the youth at length, "or where shall I find you later on?"

"I'll do whatever you like best," said the other in a rich brogue, "I'm agreeable to go or stay, 'ad utramparatus,'" and Billy Traynor, for it was he, shut up his venerable volume.

"I don't wish to disturb you," said the

boy mildly, "you can read." "I cannot; I have a fretful, impatient feeling over me, that, perhaps, will go off with exercise. I'll set out then for a walk, and come back here towards evening, then go and dine at the Rocca, and afterwards whatever you please."

"If you say that, then," said Billy, in a voice of evident delight, "we'll finish the day at the Professor Tadeucci's, and get him to go over that analysis again."

"I have no taste for chemistry. It always seems to me to end where it began," said the boy impatiently. "Where do all researches tend to? how are you elevated in intellect? how are your thoughts higher, wider, nobler, by all these mixings and manipulations?"

"Is it nothing to know how thunder and lightning is made? to understand electricity, to dive into the secrets of that old crater there, and see the ingredients in the crucible that was bilin' three thousand years ago?"

"These things appeal more grandly to my imagination, when the mystery of their forces is unrevealed. I like to think of them as dread manifestations of a mighty will, rather than gaseous combinations, or metallic affinities."

"And what prevents you?" said Billy, eagerly, "is the grandeur of the phenomenon impaired, because it is in part intelligible? Ain't you elevated as a reasoning being, when you get, what I may call, a peep into God's workshop, rather than by implicitly accepting results just as any old woman accepts a superstition?"

"There is something ignoble in mechanism," said the boy angrily.

"Don't say that, while your heart is beatin' and your arteries is contractin'—never say it as long as your lungs dilate or collapse. It's mechanism makes water burst out of the ground, and, swelling into streams, flow as mighty rivers through the earth. It's mechanism that raises the sap to the topmost bough of the cedar tree that waves over Lebanon. 'Tis the same power moves planets above, just to show us that as there is nothing without a cause—there is one great and final 'Cause' behind all."

"And will you tell me," said the boy, sneeringly, "that a sunbeam pours more gladness into your heart, because the machinery of a prism has explained to you the composition of light?"

"God's blessings never seemed the less to me, because he taught me the beautiful laws that guide them," said Billy, reverently: "every little step that I take out of darkness is on the road, at least, to Him."

In part abashed by the words, in part admonished by the tone of the speaker, the boy was silent for some minutes. "You know, Billy," said he, at length, "that I

spoke in no irreverence—that I would no more insult your convictions than I would outrage my own. It is simply that it suits my dreamy indolence to like the wonderful better than the intelligible; and you must acknowledge that there never was so palatable a theory for ignorance.”

“Aye, but I don’t want you to be ignorant,” said Billy, earnestly; “and there’s no greater mistake than supposing that knowledge is an impediment to the play of fancy. Take my word for it, Master Charles, imagination, no more than any one else, does not work best in the dark.”

“I certainly am no adept under such circumstances,” said the boy. “I have n’t told you what happened me in the studio last night. I went in without a candle, and, trying to grope my way to the table, I overturned the large olive jar, full of clay, against my Niobe, and smashed her to atoms.”

“Smashed Niobe!” cried Billy, in horror.

“In pieces. I stood over her sadder than ever she felt herself, and I have not had the courage to enter the studio since.”

“Come, come let us see if she could n’t be restored,” said Billy, rising. “Let us go down there together.”

“You may, if you have any fancy—there’s the key,” said the boy. “I’ll return there no more till the rubbish be cleared away,” and so saying he moved off, and was soon out of sight.

Deeply grieving over this disaster, Billy Traynor hastened from the spot, but he had only reached the garden of the Chiaja when he heard a faint, weak voice calling him by his name; he turned, and saw Sir Horace Upton, who, seated in a sort of portable arm-chair, was enjoying the fresh air from the sea.

“Quite a piece of good fortune to meet you, Doctor,” said he smiling; “neither you nor your pupil have been near me for ten days or more.”

“Tis our own loss then, your Excellency,” said Billy, bowing; “even a chance few minutes in your company, is like whetting the intellectual razor—I feel myself sharper for the whole day after.”

“Then, why not come oftener, man?—are you afraid of wearing the steel all away?”

“Tis more afraid I am of gapping the fine edge of your Excellency, by contact with my own ruggedness,” said Billy, obsequiously.

“You were intended for a courtier, Doctor,” said Sir Horace smiling.

“If there was such a thing as a court fool now-a-days, I’d look for the place.”

“The age is too dull for such a function-

ary. They’ll not find ten men in any country of Europe equal to the office,” said Sir Horace. “One has only to see how lamentably dull are the journals dedicated to wit and drollery to admit this fact; though written by many hands—how rare it is to chance upon what provokes a laugh. You’ll have fifty metaphysicians anywhere before you’ll hit on one Moliere. Will you kindly open this umbrella for me. This autumnal sun, they say, gives sun-stroke. And now what do you think of this boy—he’ll not make a diplomatist, that’s clear?”

“He’ll not make anything—just for one simple reason, because he could be whatever he pleased.”

“An intellectual spendthrift,” sighed Sir Horace. “What a hopeless bankruptcy it leads to.”

“My notion is ’t would be spoiling him entirely to teach him a trade or a profession. Let his great faculties shoot up without being trimmed or trained—don’t want to twist or twine or turn them, at all, but just see whether he won’t, out of his uncurbed nature, do better than all our discipline could effect. There’s no better colt than the one that was never backed till he was a five-year old.”

“He ought to have a career,” said Sir Horace thoughtfully. “Every man ought to have a calling, if only that he may be able to abandon it.”

“Just as a sailor has a point of departure,” said Billy.

“Precisely,” said Sir Horace, pleased at being so well appreciated.

“You are aware, Doctor,” resumed he, after a pause, “that the lad will have little or no private fortune. There are family circumstances that I cannot enter into, nor would your own delicacy require it, that will leave him almost entirely dependent on his own efforts. Now, as time is rolling over, we should bethink us what direction it were wisest to give his talents—for he has talents.”

“He has genius and talents both,” said Billy; “he has the raw material and the workshop to manufacture it.”

“I am rejoiced to hear such an account from one so well able to pronounce,” said Sir Horace, blandly; and Billy bowed, and blushed with a sense of happiness that none but humble men, so praised, could ever feel.

“I should like much to hear what you would advise for him,” said Upton.

“He’s so full of promise,” said Billy “that whatever he takes to I’ll be sure to fancy he’d be better at something else. See now—it isn’t a bull I’m sayin’, but I’ll make a blunder of it if I try to explain.”



"Go on, I think I apprehend you."

"By coorse you do. Well, it's that same feelin' makes me cautious of sayin' what he ought to do. For, after all, a variety of capacity implies discursiveness, and discursiveness is the mother of failure."

"You speak like an oracle, Doctor."

"If I do it's because the priest is beside me," said Billy, bowing. "My notion is this, I'd let him cultivate his fine gifts for a year or two, in any way he liked—in work or idleness—for they'll grow in the fallow as well as in the tilled land. I'd let him be whatever he liked—striving always, as he's sure to be striving after something higher, and greater, and better than he'll ever reach; and then when he has felt both his strength and his weakness, I'd try and attach him to some great men in public life; set a grand ambition before him and say, 'go on.'"

"He's scarcely the stuff for public life," muttered Sir Horace.

"He is," said Billy, boldly.

"He'd be easily abashed—easily deterred by failure."

"Sorra bit. Success might cloy, but failure would never damp him."

"I can't fancy him a speaker."

"Rouse him by a strong theme and a flat contradiction, and you'll see what he can do."

"And then his lounging, idle habits——"

"He'll do more in two hours than any one else in two days."

"You are a warm admirer, my dear Doctor," said Sir Horace smiling blandly. "I should almost rather have such a friend than the qualities that win the friendship. Have you a message for me, Antonie," said he to a servant who stood at a little distance, waiting the order to approach. The man came forward, and whispered a few words, Sir Horace's cheek gave a faint—the very faintest possible sign of flush—as he listened, and uttering a brief, "Very well," dismissed the messenger.

"Will you give me your arm, Doctor?" said he languidly; and the elegant Sir Horace Upton passed down the crowded promenade leaning on his uncouth companion, without the slightest consciousness of the surprise and sarcasm around him. No man more thoroughly could appreciate conventionalities; he would weigh the effect of appearances to the veriest nicety; but in practice he seemed either to forget this knowledge or despise it. So that as leaning on the little dwarf's arm he moved along, his very air of fashionable languor seemed to heighten the absurdity of the contrast. Nay, he actually seemed to bestow an almost deferential attention to what the other said—bowing blandly his

acquiescence, and smiling with an urbanity all his own.

Of the crowd that passed, nearly all knew the English minister. Uncovered heads were bent obsequiously; graceful salutations met him as he went—while a hundred conjectures ran as to who and what might be his companion.

He was a mesmeric professor, a writer in cypher, a Rabbi, an Egyptian explorer, an alchemist, an African traveller, and at last, Mons. Thiers!—and so the fine world of Naples discussed the humble individual, whom you and I, dear reader, are acquainted with as Billy Traynor.

#### CHAPTER XXIV.

HOW A "RECEPTION" COMES TO ITS CLOSE.

ON the evening of that day, the handsome salons of the great Hotel Universo were filled with a brilliant assemblage, to compliment the Princess Sabloukoff on her arrival. We have already introduced this lady to the reader, and have no need to explain the homage and attention of which she was the object. There is nothing which so perfectly illustrates the maxim of "*ignotum pro magnifico*" as the career of politics; certain individuals obtaining, as they do, a pre-eminence and authority from a species of mysterious prestige about them, and a reputation of having access at any moment to the highest personage in the world of state affairs. Doubtless great ministers are occasionally not sorry to see the public full cry on a false scent, and encourage to a certain extent this mysification; but still it would be an error to deny to such persons as we speak of a knowledge, if not actually an influence, in great affairs.

When the Swedish Chancellor uttered his celebrated sarcasm on the governing capacities of Europe, the political Salon, as a state engine, was not yet in existence. What additional energy might it have given to his remark, had he known that the tea-table was the chapel of ease to the council-room, and gossip a new power in the state. Despotie governments are always curious about public opinion; they dread while affecting to despise it. They, however, make a far greater mistake than this, for they imagine its true exponent to be the society of the highest in rank and station.

It is not necessary to insist upon an error so palpable, and yet it is one of which nearly every Capitol of Europe affords example, and the same council chamber that would treat a popular movement with disdain, would tremble at the epigram launched by some "elegant" of society. The theory is, the masses act, but never think: the higher ranks think, and set the rest in motion.

Whether well or ill-founded, one consequence of the system is to inundate the world with a number of persons, who, no matter what their station or pretensions, are no other than spies. If it be observed that, generally speaking, there is nothing worth recording—that society, too much engaged with its own vicissitudes, troubles itself little with those of the state; let it be remembered that the governments which employ these agencies are in a position to judge of the value of what they receive; and as they persevere in maintaining them, they are, doubtless, in some degree remunerated.

To hold this high detective employ, a variety of conditions are essential. The individual must have birth and breeding to gain access to the highest circles; conciliating manners and ample means. If a lady, she is usually young, and a beauty, or has the fame of having once been such. The strangest part of all is, that her position is thoroughly appreciated. She is recognized everywhere for what she is; and yet her presence never seems to impose a restraint or suggest a caution. She becomes in reality less a discoverer than a depository of secrets. Many have something to communicate, and are only at a loss as to the channel. They have found out a political puzzle, hit a state blot, or unravelled a cabinet mystery. Others are in possession of some personal knowledge of royalty. They have marked the displeasure of the Queen Dowager, or seen the anger of the Crown Prince. Profitable as such facts are, they are nothing without a market. Thus it is that these characters exercise a wider sphere of influence than might be naturally ascribed to them, and possess besides a terrorizing power over society, the chief members of which are at their mercy.

It is, doubtless, not a little humiliating that such should be the instruments of a government, and that royalty should avail itself of such agencies; but the fact is so, and perhaps an inquiry into the secret working of democratic institutions, might not make one a whit more proud of Popular Sovereignty.

Amongst the proficients in the great science we speak of, the Princess held the first place. Mysterious stories ran of her acquaintance with affairs the most momentous: there were narratives of her complicity in even darker events. Her name was quoted by Savary in his secret report of the Emperor Paul's death—an allusion to her was made by one of the assassins of Murat—and a gloomy record of a celebrated incident in Louis Philippe's life ascribed to her a share in a terrible tragedy. Whether believed or not, they added to the prestige that attended her, and

she was virtually a puissance in European politics.

To all the intriguists in state affairs her arrival was actually a boon. She could and would give them out of her vast capital, enough to establish them successfully in trade. To the minister of police she brought accurate descriptions of suspected characters—the “signalements” of Carbonari that were threatening half the thrones of Europe. To the foreign secretary she brought tidings of the favor in which a great Emperor held him, and a shadowy vision of the grand cross he was one day to have. She had forbidden books for the cardinal confessor, and a case of smuggled cigars for the minister of finance. The picturesque language of a *Journal de Modes* could alone convey the rare and curious details of dress which she imported for the benefit of the court ladies. In a word, she had something to secure her a welcome in every quarter—and all done with a tact and a delicacy that the most susceptible could not have resisted.

If the tone and manner of good society present little suitable to description, they are yet subjects of great interest to him who would study men in their moods of highest subtlety and astuteness. To mere passing careless observation, the reception of the Princess was a crowded gathering of a number of well-dressed people, in which the men were in far larger proportion than the other sex. There was abundance of courtesy; not a little of that half flattering compliment which is the small change of intercourse—some—not much—scandal, and a fair share of animated small talk. It was late when Sir Horace Upton entered, and, advancing to where the Princess stood, kissed her gloved hand with all the submissive deference of a courtier. The most lynx-eyed observer could not have detected either in his manner or in hers that any intimacy existed between them, much less friendship; least of all, anything still closer. His bearing was a most studied and respectful homage—hers a haughty, but condescending acceptance of it; and yet, with all this, there was that in those around that seemed to say—This man is more master here than any of us. He did not speak long with the Princess, but, respectfully yielding his place to a later arrival, fell back into the crowd, and soon after took a seat beside one of the very few ladies who graced the reception. In all they were very few, we are bound to acknowledge; for although La Sabloukoff was received at court and all the embassies, they who felt, or affected to feel, any strictness on the score of morals, avoided rather than sought her intimacy.



She covered over what might have seemed this disparagement of her conduct, by always seeking the society of men, as though their hardy and vigorous intellects were more in unison with her own than the graceful attributes of the softer sex; and in this tone did the few lady-friends she possessed appear also to concur. It was their pride to discuss matters of state and politics; and, whenever they condescended to more trifling themes, they treated them with a degree of candor, and in a spirit that allowed men to speak as unreservedly as though no ladies were present.

Let us be forgiven for polixity, since we are speaking less of individuals than of a school—a school, too, on the increase, and one whose results will be more widely felt than many are disposed to believe.

As the evening wore on, the guests bartered the news and the *bon mots*—scraps of letters from royal hands were read—epigrams from illustrious characters repeated—racy bits of courtly scandal were related, and smart explanations hazarded as to how this was to turn out, and that was to end. It was a very strange language they talked—so much seemed left for inference—so much seemed left to surmise. There was a shadowy indistinctness as it were over all, and yet their manner showed a perfect and thorough appreciation of whatever went forward. Through all this treatment of great questions, one striking feature pre-eminently displayed itself—a keen appreciation of how much the individual characters, the passions, the prejudices, the very caprices of men in power modified the acts of their governments; and thus you constantly heard such remarks as, “If the Duke of Wellington disliked the Emperor less—or, so long as Metternich has such an attachment to the Queen Dowager—when we get over Camery’s dread of the Archduchess—or, if we could only reconcile the Prince to a visit from Nesselrode”—showing that private personal feelings were swaying the minds of those whose contemplation might have seemed raised to a far loftier level. And then what a mass of very small gossip abounded—incidents so slight and insignificant that they only were lifted into importance by the actors in them being kings and kaisers! By what accidents great events were determined—on what mere trifles vast interests depended, it were, doubtless, no novelty to record: still it would startle many to be told that a casual pique, a passing word launched at hazard, some petty observance omitted or forgotten, have changed the destinies of whole nations.

It is in such circles as these that incidents of this kind are recounted. Each has some

anecdote, trivial and unimportant it may be, but still illustrating the life of those who live under the shadow of Royalty. The Princess herself was inexhaustible in these stores of secret biography; there was not a dynastic ambition to be consolidated by a marriage—not a Coburg alliance to patch up a family compact, that she was not well versed in. She detected in the vaguest movements plans and intentions, and could read the signs of a policy in indications that others would have passed without remark.

One by one the company retired, and at length Sir Horace found himself the last guest of the evening. Scarcely had the door closed on the last departure, when, drawing his arm-chair to the side of the fire opposite to that where the Princess sat, he took out his cigar case, and selecting a “weed,” deliberately lighted and commenced to smoke it.

“I thought they’d never go,” said she, with a sigh, “but I know why they remained; they all thought the Prince of Istria was coming. They saw his carriage stop here this evening, and heard he had sent up to know if I received. I wrote on a card, ‘to-morrow at dinner, at eight;’ so be sure you are here to meet him.”

Sir Horace bowed and smiled his acceptance.

“And your journey, dear Princess,” said he between the puffs of his smoke, “was it pleasant?”

“It might have been well enough, but I was obliged to make a great detour. The Duchess detained me at Parma for some letters, and then sent me across the mountains of Pontremoli, a frightful road, on a secret mission to Massa.”

“To Massa! of all earthly places.”

“Even so. They had sent down there, some eight or nine months ago, the young Count Wahnsdorf, the Archduchess Sophia’s son, who having got into all manner of dissipation at Vienna, and lost largely at play, it was judged expedient to exile him for a season; and as the Duke of Modena offered his aid to their plans, he was named to a troop in a dragoon regiment, and appointed aide-camp to his Royal Highness. Are you attending? or has your Excellency lost the clue of my story?”

“I am all ears; only waiting anxiously to hear—who is she?”

“Oh, then, you suspect a woman in the case.”

“I’m sure of it, dear Princess. The very accents of your voice prepared me for a bit of romance.”

“Yes, you are right; he has fallen in love; so desperately in love that he is incessant in his appeals to the Duchess to intercede with his family, and grant him leave to marry.”

"To marry whom?" asked Sir Horace.

"That's the very question which he cannot answer himself; and when pressed for information, can only reply that she is an angel. Now angels are not always of good family; they have sometimes very humble parents and very small fortunes."

"Hélas!" sighed the diplomatist, pitifully.

"This angel, it would seem, is untraceable; she arrived with her mother, or what is supposed to be her mother, from Corsica; they landed at Spezzia, with an English passport calling them Madame and Mademoiselle Harley. On arriving at Massa, they took a villa close to the town, and established themselves with all the circumstance of people well off as to means. They however neither received visits nor made acquaintance with any one. They even so far withdrew themselves from public view, that they rarely left their own grounds, and usually took their carriage-airing at night. You are not attending, I see."

"On the contrary, I am an eager listener; only it is a story one has heard so often. I never heard of any one preserving the incognito except where disclosure would have revealed a shame."

"Your Excellency mistakes," replied she, "the incognito is sometimes like a feigned despatch in diplomacy, a means of awakening curiosity."

"Ces ruses ne se font plus, Princess, they were the fashion in Talleyrand's time; now we are satisfied to mystify by no meaning."

"If the weapons of the old school are not employed, there is another reason, perhaps," said she, with a dubious smile.

"That modern arms are too feeble to wield them, you mean," said he, bowing courtously. "Ah! it is but too true, Princess," and he sighed what might mean regret over the fact, or devotion to herself—perhaps both. At all events his submission served as a treaty of peace, and she resumed.

"And now, 'revenons a nos moutons,'" said she, "or at least to our lambs. This Wahnsdorf is quite capable of contracting a marriage without any permission, if they appear inclined to thwart him; and the question is, what can be done? The Duke would send these people away out of his territory, only that if they be English, as their passports imply, he knows that there will be no end of trouble with your amiable government, who is never paternal till some one corrects one of her children. If Wahnsdorf be sent away, where are they to send him? besides, in all these cases, the creature carries his malady with him, and is sure to marry the first who sympathizes with him. In a word, there were difficulties on all sides,

and the Duchess sent me over, in observation, as they say, rather than with any direct plan of extrication."

"And you went?"

"Yes; I passed twenty-four hours. I could not stay longer, for I promised the Cardinal Caraffa to be in Rome on the 18th, about those Polish nunneries. As to Massa, I gathered little more than I had heard beforehand. I saw their villa; I even penetrated as far as the orangery in my capacity of traveller—the whole a perfect Paradise. I'm not sure I did not get a peep at Eve herself; at a distance, however. I made great efforts to obtain an interview, but all unsuccessfully. The police authorities managed to summon two of the servants to the Podesta, on pretence of some irregularity in their papers, but we obtained nothing out of them; and what is more, I saw clearly that nothing could be effected by a coup de main. The place requires a long siege, and I have not time for that."

"Did you see Wahnsdorf?"

"Yes; I had him to dinner with me alone at the Hotel, for, to avoid all observation, I only went to the Palace after nightfall. He confessed all his sins to me, and, like every other scapegrace, thought marriage was a grand absolution for past wickedness. He told me too, how he made the acquaintance of these strangers. They were crossing the Mazza with their carriage on a raft, when the cable snapped and they were all carried down the torrent. He happened to be a passenger at the time, and did something very heroic, I've no doubt, but I cannot exactly remember what; but it amounted to either being, or being supposed to be, their deliverer. He thus obtained leave to pay his respects at the villa; but even this gratitude was very measured: they only admitted him at rare intervals, and for a very brief visit. In fact, it was plain he had to deal with consummate tacticians, who turned the mystery of their seclusion and the honor vouchsafed him to an ample profit."

"He told them his name and his rank?"

"Yes; and he owned that they did not seem at all impressed by the revelation. He describes them as very haughty, very condescending in manner, 'tres grandes dames,' in fact, but unquestionably born to the class they represent. They never dropped a hint of whence they had come, or any circumstance of their past lives; but seemed entirely engrossed by the present, which they spend principally in cultivating the arts; they both drew admirably, and the young lady had become a most skilful modelist in clay, her whole day being passed in a studio which they had just built. I urged him strongly to try and obtain permission for me to see it,



but he assured me it was hopeless — the request might even endanger his own position with them.

"I could perceive that, though very much in love, Wahnsdorf was equally taken by the romance of this adventure. He had never been a hero to himself before, and he was perfectly enchanted by the novelty of the sensation. He never affected to say that he had made the least impression on the young lady's heart; but he gave me to understand that the nephew of an Emperor need not trouble his head on that score. He is a very good-looking, well-mannered, weak boy, who, if he only reach the age of thirty without any great blunder, will pass for a very dignified Prince for the rest of his life."

"Did you give him any hopes?"

"Of course, if he only promised to follow my counsels; and as these same counsels are yet in the oven, he must needs wait for them. In a word, he is to write to me everything, and I to him, and so we parted."

"I should like to see these people," said Upton, languidly.

"I'm sure of it," rejoined she, "but it is perhaps unnecessary," and her tone made the words very significant.

"Chelmsford, he's now Secretary at Turin, might perhaps trace them," said he, "he always knows everything of those people who are secrets to the rest of the world."

"For the present I am disposed to think it were better not to direct attention towards them," replied she. "What we do here must be done adroitly, and in such a way as that it can be disavowed if necessary, or abandoned if unsuccessful."

"Said with all your own tact, Princess," said Sir Horace smiling; "I can perceive, however, that you have a plan in your head already. Is it not so?"

"No," said she with a sigh, "I took wonderfully little interest in the affair. It was one of those games where the combinations are so few you don't condescend to learn it. Are you aware of the hour?"

"Actually three o'clock," said he, standing up. "Really, Princess, I am quite shocked."

"And so am I," said she smiling, "On se compromet si facilement dans cet bas monde." Good night," and she courtseyed, and withdrew before he had time to take his hat and retire.

## CHAPTER XXV.

## A DUKE AND HIS MINISTER.

In this age of the world, when everybody has been everywhere, seen everything, and talked with everybody, it may savor of an impertinence if we ask of our reader if he has ever been at Massa. It may so chance that he has not, and if so, as assuredly has he yet an untasted pleasure before him.

Now, to be sure, Massa is not as it once was. The little Duchy, whose capital it formed, has been united to a larger state. The distinctive features of a metropolis, and the residence of a sovereign Prince, are gone. The life, and stir, and animation which surround a Court have subsided; grass-grown streets and deserted squares replace the busy movement of former days; a dreamy weariness seems to have fallen over every one, as though life offered no more prizes for exertion, and that the day of her ambition was set forever. Yet are there features about the spot which all the chances and changes of political fortune cannot touch. Dynasties may fall, and thrones crumble, but the eternal Appenines will still rear their snow-clad summits towards the sky. Along the vast plain of ancient olives, the perfumed wind will still steal at evening, and the blue waters of the Mediterranean splash lazily among the rocks, over which the myrtle and the arbutus are hanging. There, amidst them all, half hid in clustering vines, bathed in soft odors from orange groves, with plashing fountains glittering in the sun, and foaming streams gushing from the sides of marble mountains, there stands Massa—ruined, decayed, and deserted; but beautiful in all its desolation, and fairer to gaze on than many a scene where the tide of human fortune is at the flood.

As you wonder there now, passing the deep arch over which, hundreds of feet above you, the ancient fortress frowns, and enter the silent streets, you would find it somewhat difficult to believe how, a very few years back, this was the brilliant residence of a Court, the gay resort of strangers from every land of Europe, that showy equipages traversed these weed-grown squares, and high-born dames swept proudly beneath these leafy alleys. Hard indeed to fancy the glittering throng of courtiers, the merry laughter of light-hearted beauty, beneath these trelised shades, where, moodily and slow, some solitary figure now steals along, "pondering sad thoughts over the by-gone."

But a few—a very few years ago, and Massa was in the plenitude of its prosperity. The revenues of the state were large, more than sufficient to have maintained all that such a city could require, and nearly enough

to gratify every caprice of a Prince whose costly tastes ranged over every theme, and found in each a pretext for reckless expenditure. He was one of those men whom nature, having gifted largely, takes out the compensation by a disposition of instability and fickleness that renders every acquirement valueless. He could have been anything— orator, poet, artist, soldier, statesman; and yet, in the very diversity of his abilities, there was that want of fixity of purpose, that left him ever short of success, till he himself, wearied by repeated failures, distrusted his own powers, and ceased to exert them.

Such a man, under the hard pressure of a necessity, might have done great things; as it was, born to a princely station, and with a vast fortune, he became a reckless spendthrift—a dreary visionary at one time, an enthusiastic dilettante at another. There was not a scheme of government he had not eagerly embraced and abandoned in turn. He had attached to his little capital all that Europe could boast of artistic excellence, and as suddenly he had thrown himself into the most intolerant zeal of Papal persecution—denouncing every species of pleasure, and ordaining a more than monastic self-denial and strictness. There was only one mode of calculating what he might do, which was, by imagining the very opposite to what he then was. Extremes were his delight, and he undulated between Austrian tyranny and democratic licentiousness in politics; just as he vacillated between the darkest bigotry of his church and open infidelity.

At the time when we desire to present him to our readers (the exact year is not material), he was fast beginning to weary of an interregnum of asceticism and severity. He had closed theatres and suppressed all public rejoicings; and for an entire winter he had sentenced his faithful subjects to the unbroken sway of the Priest and the Friar,—a species of rule which had banished all strangers from the Duchy; and threatened, by the injury to trade, the direst consequences to the capital. To have brought the question formally before him in all its details, would have ensured the downfall of any minister rash enough for such daring. There was, indeed, but one man about the court who had courage for the enterprise; and to him we would devote a few lines as we pass. He was an Englishman, named Stubber; he had originally come out to Italy with horses for his Highness; and been induced, by good offers of employment, to remain. He was not exactly stable-groom, nor trainer, nor was he of the dignity of master of the stables; but he was something whose attributes included a little of all and something more. One thing he assuredly was: a consummately



clever fellow, who could apply all his native Yorkshire shrewdness to a new sphere; and make of his homespun faculties the keen intelligence by which he could guide himself in novel and difficult circumstances.

A certain freedom of speech, with a bold hardihood of character, based, it is true, upon a conscious sense of honor, had brought him more than once under the notice of the Prince. His Highness felt such pleasure in the outspoken frankness of the man, that he frequently took opportunities of conversing with him, and even asking his advice. Never deterred by the subject, whatever it was, Stubber spoke out his mind, and by the very force of strong native sense, and an unswerving power of determination, soon impressed his master that his best counsels were to be had from the Yorkshire jockey, and not from the decorated and cordoned throng who filled the anti-chambers.

To elevate the groom to the rank of personal attendant; to create him a Chevalier and then a Count, were all easy steps to such a Prince. At the time we speak of, Stubber was chief of the cabinet — the trusted adviser of his master in the knottiest questions of foreign politics — the arbiter of the most difficult questions with other states, the highest authority in home affairs, and the absolute ruler over the Duke's household, and all who belonged to it. He was one of those men of action who speedily distinguish themselves wherever the game of life is being played; smart to discern the character of those around him — prompt to avail himself of their knowledge — little hampered by the scruples which conventionalities impose on men bred in a higher station — he generally attained his object before others had arranged their plans to oppose him. To these qualities he added a rugged, unflinching honesty, and a loyal attachment to the person of his Prince. Strong in his own conscious rectitude, and in the confiding regard of his sovereign, Stubber stood alone against all the wiles and machinations of his formidable rivals.

Were we giving a history of this curious court and its intrigues, we could relate some strange stories of the mechanism by which states are ruled. We have, however, no other business with the subject than as it enters into the domain of our own story, and to this we return.

It was a calm evening of the early autumn, as the prince, accompanied by Stubber alone, and unattended by even a groom, rode along one of the alleys of the olive wood which skirts the sea shore beneath Massa. His Highness was unusually moody and thoughtful, and as he sauntered carelessly along,

seemed scarcely to notice the objects about him.

"What month are we in, Stubber?" asked he at length.

"September, Altezza," was the short reply.

"Per Bacco! so it is, and in this very month we were to have been in Bohemia with the Arch-duke Stephen — the best shooting in all Europe and the largest stock of peasants in the whole world perhaps; and I, that love field sports as no man ever loved them! Eh, Stubber!" and he turned abruptly around to seek a confirmation of what he asserted. Either Stubber did not fully agree in the judgment, or did not deem it necessary to record his concurrence, but the prince was obliged to reiterate his statement, adding, "I might say, indeed, it is the one solitary dissipation I have ever permitted myself."

Now this was a stereotyped phrase of his highness, and employed by him respecting music, literature, field sports, picture-buying, equipage, play, and a number of other pursuits not quite so pardonable, in each of which, for the time, his zeal would seem to be exclusive.

A scarcely audible ejaculation, a something like a grunt from Stubber, was the only assent to this proposition.

"And here I am," added the prince testily, "the only man of my rank in Europe perhaps, without society, amusement, or pleasure, condemned to the wearisome details of a petty administration, and actually a slave — yes, sir — I say, a slave. What the deuce is this? My horse is sinking above his pasterns. Where are we, Stubber?" and with a vigorous dash of the spurs he extricated himself from the deep ground.

"I often told your Highness that these lands were ruined for want of drainage. You may remark how poor the trees are along here; the fruit, too, is all deteriorated — all for want of a little skill and industry; and if your Highness remarked the appearance of the people in that village, every second man has the ague on him."

"They did look very wretched, and why is it not drained? Why is n't everything done as it ought, Stubber? Eh?"

"Why is n't your Highness in Bohemia?"

"Want of means, my good Stubber; no money; my man, Landetti, tells me the coffer is empty, and until this new tax on the Colza comes in, we shall have to live on our credit, or our wits — I forget which, but I conclude they are about equally productive."

"Landetti is a ladro," said Stubber "He has money enough to build a new wing to

his chateau in Senarizza, and to give fifty thousand scudi of fortune to his daughter, though he can't afford your Highness the common necessities of your station."

"Per Bacco! Billy, you are right; you must look into these accounts yourself. They always confuse me."

"I have looked into them, and your Highness shall have two hundred thousand francs to-morrow on your dressing table, and as much more within the week."

"Well done, Billy; you are the only fellow who can unmask these rogues. If I had only had you with me long ago! Well! well! well! it is too late to think of now. What shall we do with this money? Bohemia is out of the question now. Shall we rebuild the San Felice? It is really too small; the stage is crowded with twenty people on it. There's that gate towards Carrara — when is it to be completed? — there's a figure wanted for the centre pedestal. As for the fountain, it must be done by the municipality. It is essentially the interest of the townspeople. You'd advise me to spend the money in draining these low lands, or in a grant to that new company for a pier at Marino; but I'll not; I have other thoughts in my head. Why should not this be the centre of art to the whole Peninsula? Carrara is a city of sculptors. Why not concentrate their efforts here — by a gallery? I have myself some glorious things — the best group Canova ever modelled — the original Ariadne, too — far finer than the thing people go to see at Frankfort. Then there's Tanderini's Shepherd with the Goats. Who lives yonder, Stubber? What a beautiful garden it is!" And he drew up short in front of a villa, whose grounds were terraced in a succession of gardens, down to the very margin of the sea. Plants and shrubs of other climates were mingled with those familiar to Italy, making up a picture of singular beauty, by diversity of color and foliage. "Isn't this the 'Ombretta,' Stubber?"

"Yes, Altezza; but the Morelli have left it. It is set now to a stranger — a French lady. Some call her English, I believe."

"To be sure; I remember. There was a demand about a formal permission to reside here. Landetti advised me not to sign it — that she might turn out English, or have some claim upon England, which was quite equivalent to placing the Duchy, and all within it, under that blessed thing they call British protection."

"There are worse things than even that," muttered Stubber.

"British occupation perhaps you mean; well, you may be right. At all events, I did not take Landetti's advice, for I gave

the permission, and I have never heard more of her. She must be rich, I take it. See what order this place is kept in; that conservatory is very large indeed, and the orange trees are finer than ours."

"They seem very fine, indeed," said Stubber.

"I say, sir, that we have none such at the Palace. I'll wager a zecchino they have come from Naples; and look at that magnolia I tell you, Stubber, this garden is very far superior to ours."

"Your Highness has not been in the Palace gardens lately, perhaps. I was there this morning, and they are really in admirable order."

"I'll have a peep inside of these grounds, Stubber," said the Duke, who, no longer attentive to the other, only followed out his own train of thought. At the same instant he dismounted, and without giving himself any trouble about his horse, made straight for a small wicket which lay invitingly open in front of him. The narrow skirting of copse passed, the Duke at once found himself in the midst of a lovely garden, laid out with consummate skill and taste, and offering at intervals the most beautiful views of the surrounding scenery. Although much of what he beheld around him was the work of many years, there were abundant traces of innovation and improvement. Some of the statues were recently placed, and a small temple of Grecian architecture seemed to have been just restored. A heavy curtain hung across the doorway; drawing back which, the Duke entered what he at once perceived to be a sculptor's studio. Casts and models lay carelessly about, and a newly-begun group stood enshrouded in the wetted drapery with which artists clothe their unfinished labors. No mean artist himself, the Duke examined critically the figures before him, nor was he long in perceiving that the artist had committed more than one fault in drawing and proportion.

"This is amateur work," said he to himself, "and yet not without cleverness and a touch of genius too. Your dilettante scorns anatomy, and will not submit to drudgery; hence, here are muscles incorrectly developed, and their action ill expressed." So saying, he sat down before the model, and taking up one of the tools at his side, began to correct some of the errors in the work. It was exactly the kind of task for which his skill adapted him. Too impatient and too discursive to accomplish anything of his own, he was admirably fitted to correct the faults of another, and so he worked away vigorously — totally forgetting where he was, how he had come there, and as utterly oblivious of Stubber, whom he had left with-



out. Growing more and more interested as he proceeded, he arose at length to take a better view of what he had done, and standing some distance off, exclaimed aloud, "Per Bacco! I have made a good thing of it—there's life in it now."

"So indeed is there," cried a gentle voice behind him, and turning he beheld a young and very beautiful girl, whose dress was covered by the loose blouze of a sculptor. "How I thank you for this!" said she, blushing deeply as she curtsied before him. "I have had no teaching—and never till this moment knew how much I needed it."

"And this is your work, then?" said the Duke, who turned again towards the model. "Well, there is promise in it. There is even more. Still you have hard labor before you, if you would be really an artist. There is a grammar in these things, and he who would speak the tongue must get over the declensions. I know but little myself—"

"Oh do not say so," cried she, eagerly; "I feel that I am in a master's presence."

The Duke started, partly struck by the energy of her manner; in part by the words themselves. It is often difficult for men in his station to believe that they are not known and recognized, and so he stood wondering at her, and thinking who she could be that did not know him to be the prince. "You mistake me," said he gently, and with that dignity which is the birthright of those born to command. "I am but a very indifferent artist. I have studied a little, it is true; but other pursuits and idleness have swept away the small knowledge I once possessed, and left me, as to art, pretty much as I am in morals—that is, I know what is right, but very often I can't accomplish it."

"You are from Carrara, I conclude?" said the young girl timidly, still curious to hear more about him.

"Pardon me," said he, smiling, "I am a native of Massa, and live here."

"And are you not a sculptor by profession?" asked she, still more eagerly.

"No," said he, laughing pleasantly; "I follow a more precarious trade, nor can I mould the clay I work in, so deftly."

"At least you love art," said she, with an enthusiasm heightened by the changes he had effected in her group.

"Now it is my turn to question, Signorina," said he, gaily. "Why, with a talent like yours, have you not given yourself to regular study? You live in a land where instruction should not be difficult to obtain. Carrara is one vast studio; there must be many there who would not alone be willing, but even proud to have such a pupil. Have you never thought of this?"

"I have thought of it," said she, pensively, "but my aunt, with whom I live, desires to see no one, to know no one—even now," added she, blushing deeply, "I find myself conversing with an utter stranger, in a way——" She stopped, overwhelmed with confusion, and he finished her sentence for her.

"In a way which shows how naturally a love of art establishes a confidence between those who possess it." As he spoke, the curtain was drawn back, and a lady entered, who, though several years older, bore such a likeness to the young girl that she might readily have been taken for her sister.

"It is at length time I should make my excuses for this intrusion, madame," said he, turning towards her, and then in a few words explained how the accidental passing by the spot and the temptation of the open wicket had led him to a trespass, "which," added he, smiling, "I can only say, I shall be charmed if you will condescend to retaliate. I, too, have some objects of art, and gardens which are thought worthy of a visit."

"We live here, sir, apart from the world. It is for that reason we have selected this residence," replied she, coldly.

"I shall respect your seclusion, madame," answered he, with a deep bow, "and only beg once more to tender my sincere apologies for the past. He moved towards the door as he spoke, the ladies curtsied deeply, and with a still lowlier reverence he passed out.

The Duke lingered in the garden, as though unwilling to leave the spot. For a while some doubt as to whether he had been recognized passed through his mind, but he soon satisfied himself that such was not the case, and the singularity of the situation amused him.

"I am culling a souvenir, madame," said he, plucking a moss-rose as the lady passed.

"I will give you a better one, sir," said she detaching one from her bouquet, and handing it to him,—and so they parted.

"Per Bacco! Stubber, I have seen two very charming women. They are evidently persons of condition; find out all about them, and let me hear it to-morrow;"—and so saying, his Highness rode away, thinking pleasantly over his adventure, and fancying a hundred ways in which it might be amusingly carried out. The life of princes is rarely fertile in surprises; perhaps, therefore, the uncommon and the unusual are the pleasantest of all their sensations.

## CHAPTER XXVI.

## ITALIAN TROUBLES.

STUBBER knew his master well. There was no need for any prequisitions on his part; the ladies, the studio, and the garden

were totally forgotten ere nightfall. Some rather alarming intelligence had arrived from Carrara, which had quite obliterated every memory of his late adventure. That little town of artists had long been the resort of an excited class of politicians, and it was more than rumored that the "Carbonari" had established there a lodge of their order. Inflammatory placards had been posted through the town—violent denunciations of the government—vengeance, even on the head of the sovereign, openly proclaimed, and a speedy day promised when the wrongs of an enslaved people should be avenged in blood. The messenger who brought the alarming tidings to Massa carried with him many of the inflammatory documents, as well as several knives and poinards, discovered by the activity of the police in a ruined building at the sea shore. No arrests had as yet been made, but the authorities were in possession of information with regard to various suspicious characters, and the police prepared to act at a moment's notice.

It was an hour after midnight when the council met, and the Duke sat pale, agitated, and terrified at the table, with Landetti, the Prime Minister, Capreni, the Secretary for Foreign Affairs, and General Ferruccio, the War Minister,—a venerable ecclesiastic, Monsignore Abbati, occupying the lowest place in virtue of his humble station, as confessor of his Highness. He who of all others enjoyed his master's confidence, and whose ready intelligence was most needed in the emergency, was not present; his title of Minister of the Household not qualifying him for a place at the council.

Whatever the result, the deliberation was a long one. Even while it continued, there was time to despatch a courier to Carrara, and receive the answer he brought back; and when the Duke returned to his room, it was already far advanced in the morning. Fatigued and harrassed, he dismissed his valet at once, and desired that Stubber might attend him. When he arrived, however, his Highness had fallen off asleep, and lay, dressed as he was, on his bed.

Stubber sat noiselessly beside his master, his mind deeply pondering over the events which, although he had not been present at the council, had all been related to him. It was not the first time he had heard of that formidable conspiracy, which, under the title of the Carbonari, had established themselves in every corner of Europe.

In the days of his humbler fortune he had known several of them intimately; he had been often solicited to join their band; but while steadily refusing this, he had detected

much which to his keen intelligence savored of treachery to the cause amongst them. This cause was necessarily recruited from those whose lives rejected all honest and patient labor. They were the disappointed men of every station, from the highest to the lowest. The ruined gentleman—the beggared noble—the bankrupt trader—the houseless artizan—the homeless vagabond, were all there; bold, daring and energetic, fearless as to the present, reckless as to the future. They sought for any change, no matter what, seeing that in the convulsion their own condition must be bettered. Few troubled their heads how these changes were to be accomplished—they cared little for the real grievances they assumed to redress—their work was demolition. It was to the hour of pillage alone they looked for the recompense of their hardihood. Some unquestionably, took a different view of the agencies and the objects; dreamy speculative men, with high aspirations, hoped that the cruel wrongs which tyranny inflicted on many a European state might be effectually curbed by a glorious freedom—when each man's actions should be made conformable to the benefit of the community, and the will of all be typified in the conduct of each. There was, however, another class, and to these Stubber had given deep attention. It was a party whose singular activity and energy were always in the ascendant—ever suggesting bold measures whose results could scarcely be more than menaces, and advocating actions whose greatest effect could not rise above acts of terror and dismay. And thus while the leaders plotted great political convulsions, and the masses dreamed of sack and pilage, these latter dealt in acts of suicidal assassination—the vengeance of the poinard and the poison cup. These were the men Stubber had studied with no common attention. He fancied he saw in them neither the dupes of their own excited imaginations, nor the reckless followers of rapine, but an order of men equal to the former by intelligence, but far transcending the last in crime and infamy. In his own early experiences he had perceived that more than one of these had expatriated themselves suddenly, carrying away to foreign shores considerable wealth, and that, too, under circumstances where the acquisition of property seemed scarcely possible. Others, he had seen, as suddenly throwing off their political associates, run into stations of rank and power; and one memorable case he knew, where the individual had become the chief adviser of the very state whose destruction he had sworn to accomplish. Such a one he now fancied he had detected among



the advisers of his Prince, and, deeply ruminating on this theme, he sat at the bed-side.

"Is it a dream, Stubber, or have we really heard bad news from Carrara? Has Frascchetti been stabbed, or not?"

"Yes, your Highness, he has been stabbed, exactly two inches below where he was wounded in September last—then it was his pocket-book saved him; now it was your Highness' picture, which, like a faithful follower, he always carried about him."

"Which means that you disbelieve the whole story."

"Every word of it."

"And the poinards found at the Bocca de Magni?"

"Found by those who placed them there."

"And the proclamations?"

"Blundering devices. See, here is one of them, printed on the very paper supplied to the Government offices. There's the water mark, with the crown and your own cypher on it."

"Per Bacco! so it is. Let me show this to Landetti."

"Wait a while, your Highness; let us trace this a little further. No arrests have been made."

"None."

"Nor will any. The object in view is already gained; they have terrified you, and secured the next move."

"What do you mean?"

"Simply that they have persuaded you that this state is the hotbed of revolutionists; that your own means of security and repression are unequal to the emergency; that disaffection exists in the army; and that, whether for the maintenance of the government or your safety, you have only one course remaining."

"Which is—"

"To call in the Austrians."

"Per Bacco! it is exactly what they have advised. How did you come to know it? Who is the traitor at the council board?"

"I wish I could tell you the name of one who was not such. Why, your Highness, these fellows are not *your* ministers, except in so far as they are paid by you. They are Metternich's people; they receive their appointments from Vienna, and are only accountable to the cabinet held at Schoenbrunn. If wise and moderate counsels prevailed here, if our financial measures prospered, if the people were happy and contented, how long, think you, would Lombardy submit to be ruled by the rod and the bayonet? Do you imagine that you will be suffered to give an example to the peninsula of a good administration?"

"But so it is," broke in the Prince. "I

defy any man to assert the opposite. The country *is* prosperous, the people *are* contented, the laws justly administered, and, I hesitate not to say, myself as popular as any sovereign of Europe."

"And I tell your Highness, just as distinctly, that the country is ground down with taxation, even to export duties on the few things we have to export—that the people are poor to the very verge of starvation—that if they do not take to the highways as brigands, it is because their traditions as honest men yet survive amongst them—that the laws only exist as an agent of tyranny, arrest and imprisonment being at the mere carpipe of the authorities. Nor is there a means by which an innocent man can demand his trial, and insist on being confronted with his accuser. Your jails are full, crowded to a state of pestilence with supposed political offenders, men that, in a free country, would be at large, toiling industriously for their families, and whose opinions could never be dangerous, if not festering in the foul air of a dungeon. And as to *your own* popularity, all I say is, don't walk in the Piazza at Carrara after dusk. No, nor even at noon-day."

"And you dare to speak thus to me, Stubber!" said the Prince, his face covered with a deadly pallor as he spoke, and his white lips trembling, but less in passion than in fear.

"And why not, sir? Of what value could such a man as I am be to your service, if I were not to tell you what you'll never hear from others—the plain, simple truth? Is it not clear enough that if I only thought of my own benefit, I'd say whatever you'd like best to hear—I'd tell you, like Landetti, that the taxes were well paid, or say, as Cerreccio did, t'other day, that your army would do credit to any state in Europe; when he well knew at the time, that the artillery was in mutiny from arrears of pay, and the cavalry horses dying from short rations!"

"I am well weary of all this," said the duke, with a sigh. "If the half of what I hear of my kingdom, every day, be but true, my lot in life is worse than a galley-slave's. One assures me that I am bankrupt; another calls me a vassal of Austria; a third makes me out a Papal spy, and you aver that if I venture into the streets of my own town—in the midst of my own people, I am almost sure to be assassinated!"

"Take no man's word, sir, for what, while you can see for yourself, it is your own duty to ascertain," said Stubber resolutely. "If you really only desire a life of ease and indolence, forgetting what you owe to yourself and those you rule over, send for

the Austrians. Ask for a brigade and a general. You'll have them for the asking. They'd come at a word, and try your people at the drum head, and flog and shoot them with as little disturbance to you as need be! You may pension off the judges; for a court martial is a far speedier tribunal, and a corporal's guard is quite an economy in criminal justice. Trade will not perhaps prosper with martial law, nor is a state of siege thought favorable to commerce. No matter. You'll sleep safe so long as you keep within doors, and the band under your window will rouse the spirit of nationality in your heart, as it plays, 'God preserve the Emperor!'"

"You forget yourself, sir, and you forget me!" said the Duke sternly, as he drew himself up, and threw a look of insolent pride at the speaker.

"Mayhap I do, your Highness," was the ready answer, "and out of that very forgetfulness let your Highness take a warning. I say, once more, I distrust the people about you, and as to this conspiracy at Carrara, I'll wager a round sum on it, that it was hatched on t'other side of the Alps, and paid for in good florins of the Holy Roman Empire. At all events, give me time to investigate the matter. Let me have 'till the end of the week to examine into it, and if I find nothing to confirm my views, I'll say not one word against all the measures of precaution that your council are bent on importing from Austria."

"Take your own way; I promise nothing," said the Duke haughtily, and with a motion of his hand dismissed his adviser.

#### CHAPTER XXVII.

##### CARRARA.

To all the luxuriant vegetation and cultivated beauty of Massa, glowing in the "golden glories" of its orange groves—steeped in the perfume of its thousand gardens—Carrara offers the very strongest contrast. Built in a little cleft of the Apennines, it is begirt with great mountains—wild, barren, and desolate,—some dark and precipitous, have no traces in their sides but those of the torrents which are formed by the melting snows; others show the white caves, as they are called, of that pure marble which has made the name of the spot famous throughout Europe. High in the mountain sides, escarped amidst rocks, and zig-zagging over many a dangerous gorge and deep abyss, are the rough roads trodden by the weary oxen—trailing along their massive loads, and straining their stout chests to drag the great white blocks of glittering stone. Far down below, crossed

and re-crossed by splashing torrents, sprinkled with the spray of a hundred cataracts, stands Carrara itself,—a little marble city of art,—every house a studio, every citizen a sculptor. Hither are sent out all the marvellous conceptions of genius—the models which mighty imaginations have begotten, to be converted into imperishable stone. Here are the grand conceptions gathered for every land and clime, treasures destined to adorn the great galleries of nations, or the splendid palaces of kings.

Some of these studios are of imposing size and vast proportions, and not devoid of a certain architectural pretension—a group, a figure, or a bas relief usually adorning the space over the door; and by its subject giving some indication of the tastes of the proprietor. Thus Madonnas and saints are of frequent occurrence; and the majority of the artists display their faith by an image of the saint whose patronage they claim. Others exhibit some ideal conception; and a few denote their nationality by the bust of their sovereign, or some prince of his house.

One of these buildings, a short distance from the town, and so small as to be little more than a mere crypt, was distinguished by the chaste and simple elegance of its design, and the elaborate ornament with which its owner had decorated the most minute details of the building. He was a young artist, who had arrived in Carrara friendless and unknown, but whose abilities had soon obtained for him consideration and employment. At first, the tasks entrusted to him were the humbler ones of friezes and decorative art; but at length, his skill becoming acknowledged, to his hands were confided the choicest conceptions of Danneker—the most rare creations of Canova. Little or nothing was known of him; his habits were of the strictest seclusion,—he went into no society, he formed no friendships. His solitary life, after a while, ceased to attract any notice; and men saw him pass, and come and go, without question,—almost without greeting; and save when some completed work was about to be packed off to its destination, the name of Sebastian Grippi was rarely heard in Carrara.

His strict retirement had not, however, exempted him from the jealous suspicions of the authorities; on the contrary, the seeming mystery of his life had sharpened their curiosity and aroused their zeal; and more than once was he summoned to the Prefecture to answer some frivolous questions about his passport or his means of subsistence.

It was on one of these errands that he stood one morning in the ante-chamber of the Podesta's court, awaiting his turn to be called and interrogated. The heat of a



crowded chamber, the wearisome delay, — perhaps, too, some vexation at the frequency of these irritating calls — had partially excited him; and when he was at length introduced, his manner was confused, his replies vague and almost wandering.

Two strangers, whose formal permissions to reside were then being filled up by a clerk, were accommodated with seats in the room, and listened with no slight interest to a course of enquiry so strange and novel to their ears.

"Grippi!" cried the harsh voice of the President, "come forward," and a youth stood up, dressed in the blue blouse of a common workman, and wearing the coarse shoes of the very humblest laborer; but yet in the calm dignity of his mien, and the mild character of his sad but handsome features, already proclaiming that he came of a class whose instincts denote good blood.

"Grippi, you have a servant, it would seem, whose name is not in your passport; how is this?"

"He is a humble friend who shares my fortune, sir," said the artist. "They asked no passport from him when we crossed the Tuscan frontier; and he was since here some months, without any demand for one."

"Does he assist you in your work?"

"He does, sir, by advice and counsel; but he is not a sculptor. Poor fellow! he never dreamed that his presence here could have attracted any remark."

"His tongue and accent betray a foreign origin, Grippi?"

"Be it so, — so do mine, perhaps. Are we the less submissive to the laws?"

"The laws can make themselves respected," said the Podesta sternly; "where is this man, — how is he called?"

"He is known as Gulielmo, sir. At this moment he is ill, — he has caught the fever of the Campagna, and is confined to bed."

"We shall send to ascertain that fact," was the reply.

"Then my word is doubted!" said the youth haughtily.

The Podesta started, but more in amazement than anger. There was, indeed, enough to astonish him in the haughty ejaculation of the poorly-clad boy.

"I am given to believe that you are not, as your passport would imply, — a native of Capri, nor a Neapolitan born," said the Podesta.

"If my passport be regular and my conduct blameless, what have you or any one to do with my birth-place? Is there any charge alleged against me?"

"You are forgetting where you are, boy; but I may take measures to remind you of

it," said the Podesta, whispering to a sergeant of the *gend'armes* at his side.

"I hope I have said nothing that could offend you," said the boy, eagerly; "I scarcely know what I have said. My wish is to submit myself in all obedience to the laws — to live quietly and follow my trade. If my presence here give displeasure to the authorities, I will, however sorry, take my departure, though I cannot say whether to —" The last words were uttered falteringly, and in a kind of soliloquy, and only overheard by the two strangers, who now having received their papers, arose to withdraw.

"Will you call at our inn and speak with us: that's my card;" said one, as he passed out, and gave a visiting card into the youth's hand.

He took it without a word; indeed he was too deeply engaged in his own thoughts to pay much attention to the request.

"The sergeant will accompany you, my good youth, to your lodgings, and verify what you have stated as to your companion. To-morrow you will appear here again to answer certain questions we shall put to you as to your subsistence, and the means by which you live."

"Is it a crime to have where-withal to subsist upon?" asked the boy.

"He whose means of living are disproportionate to his evident station may well be an object of suspicion," said the other, with a sneer.

"And who is to say what is my station, or what becomes it? Will you take upon you to pronounce upon the question?" cried the boy, insolently.

"Mayhap it is what I shall do very soon!" was the calm answer.

"Then let me have done with this. I'll leave the place as soon as my friend be able to bear removal."

"Even that I'll not promise for."

"Why, you'll not detain me here by force?" exclaimed the youth.

A cold, ambiguous smile was the only reply he received to this speech.

"Well, let us see when this restraint is to begin," cried the boy, passionately, as he moved towards the door; but no impediment was offered to his departure. On the contrary, the servant, at a signal from the Prefect, threw wide the two sides of the folding doors, and the youth passed out, down the stairs, and into the street.

His mind obscured by passion, his heart bursting with indignation, he threaded his way through many a narrow lane and alley, till he reached a small rustic bridge, crossing which, he ascended a narrow flight of steps

cut in the solid rock, and gained a little terrace on which stood a small cottage of the humblest kind.

As usual in Italy, during the summer time, the glass sashes of the windows had been removed, and the shutters closed. Opening one of these gently with his hand, he peeped in, and as suddenly a voice cried out, "Are you come back? O how my heart was aching to see you here again! Come in quickly, and let me touch your hand."

The next moment the boy was seated by the bed, where lay a man greatly emaciated by sickness, and bearing in his worn features the traces of a severe tertian.

"It's going off now," said he, "but the fit was a long one. This morning it began at eight o'clock; but I'm throwing it off now, and I'll soon be better."

"My poor fellow," said the boy, caressing the cold fingers within his own hands, "it was in these mid-night rambles of mine you caught the terrible malady, as it ever has been. Your fidelity is fatal to you. I told you a thousand times that I was born to hard luck, and carried more than enough to swamp all who might try to succor me."

"And don't I say, as the old heathen philosopher did of fortune, 'Nullum numen habes, si sit prudentia'?" Is it necessary to say that the speaker was Billy Traynor, and the boy his pupil?

"Prudentia," said the youth, scoffingly, "may mean anything from trickery to downright meanness; since, by such acts as these, men grow great in life. Prudentia is thrift and self-denial; but it is more, too — it is a compromise between a man's dignity and his worldly success — it is the compact that says, bear *this*, that *that* may happen — and so I'll none of it."

"Tell me how you fared with the Prefect," asked Billy.

"You shall hear, and judge for yourself," said the other, and related, as well as his memory would serve him, the circumstances of his late interview.

"Well! well!" said Billy, "it might be worse."

"I knew you'd say so, poor fellow," said the youth, affectionately; "you accept the rubs of life as cheerfully as I take them with impatience. But, after all, this is matter of temperament, too. You can forgive — I love better to resist."

"Mine is the better philosophy though," said Billy, "since it will last one's lifetime. Forgiveness must dignify old age, when your virtue of resistance be no longer possible."

"I never wish to reach the time when I may be too old for it," said the boy, passionately.

"Hush, don't say that. It's not for you

to determine how long you are to live, nor in what frame of mind years are to find you." He paused, and there was a long unbroken silence between them.

"I have been at the post," said the youth at last, "and found that letter which, by the Neapolitan post-mark, must have been dispatched many weeks since."

Billy Traynor took up the letter, whose seal was yet unbroken, and having examined it carefully, returned it to him, saying, "You did n't answer his last, I think?"

"No; and I half hoped he might have felt offended, and given up the correspondence. What have we to do with ambassadors or great ministers, Billy? Ours is not the grand highway in life, but the humble path on the mountain side."

"I'm content if it only lead upwards," said the sick man; and the words were uttered firmly, but with the solemn fervor of prayer.

#### CHAPTER XXVIII.

##### A NIGHT SCENE.

As young Massy — for so we like best to call him — sat with the letter in his hand, a card fell to the ground from between his fingers, and taking it up he read the name, Lord Frobischer.

"What does this mean, Billy?" asked he; "whom can it belong to? O, I remember now. There were some strangers at the Podesta's office, this morning when I was there; and one of them asked me to call at this inn, and speak with them."

"He has seen 'the Alcibiades,'" exclaimed Billy, eagerly. "He has been at the studio?"

"How should he?" rejoined the youth. "I have not been there myself for two days: here is the key!"

"He has heard of it, then — of that I'm certain; since he could not be in the town here an hour, without some one telling him of it."

Massy smiled half sadly, and shook his head.

"Go and see him at all events," said Billy; "and besure to put on your coat and a hat, for one would n't know what ye were at all, in that cap and dirty blouse."

"I'll go as I am, or not at all," said the other, rising. "I am Sebastian Grippi, a young sculptor, at least," added he, bitterly.

"I have about the same right to that name that I have to any other." He turned abruptly away, as he spoke and gained the open air. There for a few moments he stood seemingly irresolute, and then wiping away a heavy tear that had fallen on his cheek, he slowly descended the steps towards the bridge.



When he reached the inn, the strangers had just dined, but left word that when he called he should be introduced at once, and Massy followed the waiter into a small garden, where in a species of summer house they were seated at their wine. One of them arose courteously as the youth came forward, and placing a chair for him, and filling out a glass of wine, invited him to join them.

"Give him one of your cigars, Barnard," said the other; "they are better than mine;" and Massy accepted, and began smoking without a word.

"That fellow at the police-office gave you no further trouble, I hope," said my lord, in a half-languid tone, and with that amount of difficulty that showed he was no master of Italian.

"No," replied Massy, "for the present, he has done nothing more. I'm not so certain, however, that to-morrow or next day I shall not be ordered away from this."

"On what grounds?"

"Suspicion — heaven knows of what."

"That's infamous, I say. Eh, Barnard!"

"Detestable," muttered the other.

"And where to can you go?"

"I scarcely know as yet, since the police are in communication throughout the whole Peninsula, and they transmit your character from state to state."

"They'd not credit this in England, Barnard!"

"No, not a word of it!" rejoined the other.

"You're a Neapolitan, I think I heard him say."

"So my passport states."

"Ah, he won't say that he is one though," interposed his lordship in English. "Do you mind that, Barnard?"

"Yes, I remarked it," was the reply.

"And how came you here originally?" asked Frobisher, turning towards the youth.

"I came here to study and to work.

There is always enough to be had to do in this place, copying the works of great masters; and at one's spare moments there is time to try something of one's own."

"And have you done anything of that kind?"

"Yes, I have begun. I have attempted two or three."

"We should like to see them, eh, Barnard?"

"Of course, when we've finished our wine. It's not far off, is it?"

"A few minutes' walk, but not worth even that, when the place is full of things really worth seeing. There's 'Danneker's Bathing Nymph,' and 'Canova's Dead Cupid,' and 'Rauch's Antigone,' all within reach."

"Mind that, Barnard, we must see all these to-morrow. Could you come about with us, and show us what we ought to see?"

"Who knows if I shall not be on the road to-morrow?" said the youth smiling faintly.

"O, I think not — if there's really nothing against you — if it's only mere suspicion, eh, Barnard?"

"Just so!" said the other, and drank off his wine.

"And are you able to make a good thing of it here — by copying, I mean!" asked his lordship, languidly.

"I can live," said the youth; "and as I labor very little and idle a great deal, that is saying enough perhaps."

"I'm not sure the police are not right about him after all, Barry," said his lordship; "he doesn't seem to care much about his trade," and Massy was unable to repress a smile at the remark.

"You don't understand English, do you?" asked Frobisher, with a degree of eagerness very unusual to him.

"Yes, I am English by birth," was the answer.

"English! and how came you to call yourself a Neapolitan; what was the object of that?"

"I wished to excite less notice and less observation here, and if possible to escape the jealousy with which Englishmen are regarded by the authorities — for this I obtained a passport at Naples."

Barnard eyed him suspiciously as he spoke, and as he sipped his wine continued to regard him with a keen glance.

"And how did you manage to get a Neapolitan passport?"

"Our minister, Sir Horace Upton, managed that for me."

"Oh! you are known to Sir Horace, then!"

"Yes."

A quick interchange of looks between my lord and his friend showed that they were by no means satisfied that the young sculptor was simply a worker in marble, and a fashioner in modelling-clay.

"Have you heard from Sir Horace, lately?" asked Lord Frobisher.

"I received this letter to-day, but I have not read it," and he showed the unopened letter as he spoke.

"The police may then have some reasonable suspicions about your residence here," said his lordship, slowly.

"My lord," said Massy, rising, "I have had enough of this kind of examination from the Podesta himself this morning, not to care to pass my evening in a repetition of it. Who I am, what I am, and with what object

here, are scarcely matters in which you have any interest, and assuredly were not the subjects on which I expected you should address me. I beg now to take my leave." He moved towards the garden as he spoke, bowing respectfully to each.

"Wait a moment, pray don't go—sit down again—I never meant—of course I could n't mean so—eh, Barnard?" said his lordship, stammering in great confusion.

"Of course not," broke in Barnard; "his lordship's inquiries were really prompted by a sincere desire to serve you."

"Just so—a sincere desire to serve you."

"In fact, seeing you, as I may say, in the toils."

"Exactly so—in the toils."

"He thought very naturally that his influence and his position might, you understand—for these fellows know perfectly what an English peer is—they take a proper estimate of the power of Great Britain."

His lordship nodded assentingly, as though any stronger corroboration might not be exactly graceful on his part; and Barnard went on.

"Now, you perfectly comprehend why—you see at once the whole thing, and I'm sure instead of feeling any soreness or irritation at my lord's interference, that in point of fact"—

"Just so," broke in his lordship, pressing Massy into a seat at his side, "just so, that's it!"

It requires no ordinary tact for any man to reseat himself at a table from which he has risen in anger or irritation, and Massy had far too little knowledge of life to overcome this difficulty gracefully. He tried indeed to seem at ease—he endeavored even to be cheerful, but the efforts were all unsuccessful. My lord was no very acute observer at any time; he was besides so constitutionally indolent, that the company which exacted least was ever the most palatable to him. As for Barnard, he was only too happy whenever least reference was made to his opinion, and so they sat and sipped their wine with wonderfully little converse between them.

"You have a statue, or a group, or something or other—haven't you?" said my lord, after a very long interval.

"I have a half finished model," said the youth, not without a certain irritation at the indifference of his questioner.

"Scarcely light enough to look at it tonight—eh, Barnard?"

"Scarcely!" was the dry answer.

"We can go in the morning though—eh, Barry?"

The other nodded a cool assent.

My lord now filled his glass, drank it off, and refilled with the air of a man nerving himself for a great undertaking—and such was indeed the case. He was about to deliver himself of a sentiment, and the occasion was one to which Barnard could not lend his assistance.

"I have been thinking," said he, "that if that same estate we spoke of, Barry—that Welsh property you know—and that thing in Ireland, should fall in—I'd buy some statues and have a gallery!"

"Devilish costly work you'd find it," muttered Barnard.

"Well, I suppose it is—not more so than a racing stable after all."

"Perhaps not."

"Besides, I look upon that property—if it does ever come to me—as a kind of wind-fall—it was one of those pieces of fortune one could n't have expected, you know"—then turning towards the youth, as if to apologize for a discussion in which he could take no part—he said, "We were talking of a property, which by the eccentricity of its owner may one day become mine."

"And which doubtless some other had calculated on inheriting," said the youth.

"Well, that may be very true—I never thought about that—eh, Barnard?"

"Why should you?" was the short response.

"Gain and loss, loss and gain," muttered the youth moodily, "are the laws of life."

"I say, Barnard, what a jolly moonlight there is out there in the garden; would n't it be a capital time this to see your model, eh?"

"If you are disposed to take the trouble," said the youth rising and blushing modestly; and the others stood up at the same moment.

Nothing passed between them as they followed the young sculptor through many an intricate by-way and narrow lane; and at last reached the little stream on whose bank stood his studio.

"What have we here!" exclaimed Barnard, as he saw it; "is this a little temple?"

"It is my work-shop," said the boy proudly, and produced the key to open the door.

Scarcely had he crossed the threshold, however, than his foot struck a roll of papers, and stooping down he caught up a large placard headed, "Morto al Tiranno," in large capitals. Holding the sheet up to the moonlight, he saw that it contained a violent and sanguinary appeal to the wildest passions of the Carbonari—one of those savage exhortations to blood-shedding, which were taken from the terrible annals of the French revolution. Some of these



bore the picture of a guillotine at top, others were headed with crossed poignards.

"What are all these about?" asked Barnard, as he took up three or four of them in his hand; but the youth, overcome with terror, could make no answer.

"These are all sansculotte literature, I take it," said his lordship—but the youth was stupefied and silent.

"Has there been any treachery at work here?" asked Barnard. "Is there a scheme to entrap you?"

The youth nodded a melancholy and slow assent.

"But why should you be obnoxious to these people? Have you any enemies amongst them?"

"I cannot tell," gloomily muttered the youth.

"And this is your statue," said Barnard, as opening a large shutter he suffered a flood of moonlight to fall on the figure.

"Fine!—a work of great merit, Barnard," broke in his lordship, whose apathy was at last overcome by admiration. But the youth stood regardless of their comments, his eyes bent upon the ground, nor did he heed them as they moved from side to side, examining the statue in all its details, and in the words of high praise speaking their approval.

"I'll buy this," muttered his lordship. "I'll give him an order, too, for another work—leaving the subject to himself—eh, Barnard?"

"A clever fellow certainly," replied the other.

"Whom does he mean the figure to represent?"

"It is Alcibiades as he meets his death," broke in the youth—"he is summoned to the door as though to welcome a friend, and he falls pierced by a poisoned arrow—there is but legend to warrant the fact. I cared little for the incident—I was full of the man, as he contended with seven chariots in the Olympic games, and proudly rode round the course with his glittering shield of ivory and gold, and his waving locks all perfumed. I thought of him in his gorgeous panoply, and his voluptuousness; lion-hearted, and danger-seeking, pampering the very flesh he offered to the spears of the enemy. I pictured him to my mind, embellishing life with every charm, and daring death in every form. Beautiful as Apollo—graceful as the bounding Mercury—bold as Achilles, the lion's whelp, as *Æschylus* calls him. This," added he, in a tone of depression, "this is but a sorry version of what my mind had conceived."

"I arrest you, Sebastiano Grippi," said a voice from behind, and suddenly three

gend'armes surrounded the youth, who stood still and speechless with terror, while a mean looking man in shabby black gathered up the printed proclamations that lay about, and commenced a search for others throughout the studio.

"Ask them will they take our bail for his appearance, Barnard," said my lord, eagerly.

"No use—they'd only laugh at us," was the reply.

"Can we be of any service to you? Is there anything we can do?" asked his lordship of the boy.

"You must not communicate with the prisoner, signore," cried the brigadier, "if you don't wish to share his arrest."

"And this, doubtless," said the man in black, standing and holding up the lantern to view the statue, "this is the figure of liberty we have heard of, pierced by the deadly arrow of tyranny!"

"You hear them!" cried the boy in wild indignation, addressing the Englishmen; "you hear how these wretches draw their infamous allegations, but this shall not serve them as a witness;" and with a spring he seized a large wooden mallet from the floor and dashed the model in pieces.

A cry of horror and rage burst from the by-standers, and as the Englishmen stooped in sorrow over the broken statue, the gend'armes secured the boy's wrists with a stout cord, and led him away.

"Go after them, Barnard; tell them he is an Englishman, and that if he comes to harm they'll hear of it!" cried my lord eagerly, while he muttered in a lower tone, "I think we might knock these fellows over and liberate him at once, eh, Barry?"

"No use if we did," replied the other; they'd overpower us afterwards. Come along to the inn, we'll see about it in the morning."

#### CHAPTER XXIX.

##### A COUNCIL OF STATE.

It was a fine mellow evening of the late autumn, as two men sat in a large and handsomely-furnished chamber, opening upon a vast garden. There was something in the dim, half light, the heavily-perfumed air, rich with the odor of the orange and the lime, and the stillness, that imparted a sense of solemnity to the scene, where, indeed, few words were interchanged, and each seemed to ponder long after every syllable of the other.

We have no mysteries with our reader, and we hasten to say that one of these personages was the Chevalier Stubber—confidential minister of the Duke of Massa; the other was our old acquaintance, Billy Tray-

nor. If there was some faint resemblance in the fortunes of these two men, who, sprung from the humblest walks of life, had elevated themselves by their talents to a more exalted station in life, there all likeness between them ended. Each represented, in some of the very strongest characteristics, a nationality totally unlike that of the other. The Saxon, blunt, imperious, and decided; the Celt, subtle, quick-sighted, and suspicious, distrustful of all save his own skill in a moment of difficulty.

"But you have not told me his real name yet," said the Chevalier, as he slowly smoked his cigar, and spoke with the half listlessness of a careless inquirer.

"I know that, sir," said Billy cautiously. "I don't see any need of it."

"Nor your own, either," remarked the other.

"Nor even that, sir," responded Billy, calmly.

"It comes to this, then, my good friend," rejoined Stubber, "that having got yourself into trouble, and having discovered, by the aid of a countryman, that a little frankness would serve you greatly, you prefer to preserve a mystery that I could easily penetrate if I cared for it, to speaking openly and freely, as a man might with one of his own."

"We have no mysteries, sir. We have family secrets, that don't regard any one but ourselves. My young ward, or pupil, whichever I ought to call him, has, maybe, his own reasons for leading a life of unobtrusive obscurity, and what one may term an umbrageous existence. It's enough for me to know that, to respect it."

"Come, come; all this is very well if you were at liberty, or if you stood on the sod of your own country; but remember where you are now, and what accusations are hanging over you. I have here beside me very grave charges indeed—constant and familiar intercourse with leaders of the Carbo-nari!"

"We don't know one of them," broke in Billy.

"Correspondence with others beyond the frontier," continued the Chevalier—

"Nor that either," interrupted Billy.

"Treasonable placards found by the police in the very hands of the accused—insolent conduct to the authorities when arrested—attempted escape: all these duly certified on oath."

"Devil may care for that—oaths are as plenty with these blaguards as clasp-knives, and for the same purpose, too. Here's what it is, now," said he, crossing his arm on the table, and staring steadfastly at the other: "we came here to study and work, to per-

fect ourselves in the art of modelin' with good studies around us; and more than all, a quiet, secluded little spot, with nothing to distract our attention, or take us out of a mind for daily labor. That we made a mistake, is clear enough. Take everywhere else in this fine country, there's nothing but tyrants on one side, and assassins on the other; and meek and humble as we lived, we could n't escape the thieving blaguards of spies!"

"Do you know the handwriting of this address?" said the Chevalier, showing a sealed letter, directed to Sebastiano Grippi, Scultore, Carrara.

"Maybe I do—maybe I don't," was the gruff reply. "Won't you let me finish what I was sayin'?"

"This letter was found in the possession of the young prisoner, and is of some consequence," continued the other, totally inattentive to the question.

"I suppose a letter is always of consequence to him it's meant for," was the half sulky reply. "Sure you're not goin' to break the seal:—sure you don't mean to read it!" exclaimed he, almost springing from his seat as he spoke.

"I don't think I'd ask your permission for anything I think fit to do, my worthy fellow," said the other, sternly; and then passing across the room, he summoned a gend'arme, who waited at the door, to enter.

"Take this man back to the Fortizza," said he calmly; and while Billy Traynor slowly followed the guard, the other seated himself leisurely at the table, lighted his candles, and perused the letter. Whether disappointed by the contents, or puzzled by the meaning, he sat long pondering with the document before him.

It was late in the night when a messenger came to say that his Highness desired to see him; and Stubber arose at once, and hastened to the Duke's chamber.

In a room, studiously plain and simple in all its furniture, and on a low uncurtained bed, lay the Prince half dressed, a variety of books and papers littering the table, and even the floor at his side. Maps, prints, colored drawings—some representing views of Swiss scenery, others being portraits of opera celebrities—were mingled with illuminated missals and richly embossed rosaries; while police reports, petitions, rose-colored billets, and bon-bons, made up a mass of confusion wonderfully typical of the illustrious individual himself.

Stubber had scarcely crossed the threshold of the room, when he appeared to appreciate the exact frame of his master's mind. It was the very essence of his luck to catch in



a moment the ruling impulse, which swayed for a time that strange and vacillating nature, and he had but to glance at him to divine what was passing within.

"So then," broke out the Prince, "here we are actually in the very midst of revolution. Marocchi has been stabbed in the Piazza of Carrara. — Is it a thing to laugh at, sir?"

"The wound has only been fatal to the breast of his surtout, your Highness; and so adroitly given besides, that it does not correspond with the incision in his waistcoat."

"You distrust every one and everything, Stubber; and of course you attribute all that is going forward to the police."

"Of course I do, your Highness. They predict events with too much accuracy not to have a hand in their fulfilment. I knew three weeks ago when this outbreak was to occur, who was to be assassinated — since that is the phrase for Marocchi's mock wound, — who was to be arrested, and the exact nature of the demand the Council would make of your royal highness to suppress the troubles."

"And what was that?" asked the Duke, grasping a paper in his hand as he spoke.

"An Austrian division, wish a half-battery of field-artillery, a judge-advocate to try the prisoners, and a provost-marshal to shoot them."

"And you'd have me believe that all these disturbances are deliberate plots of a party who desire Austrian influence in the Duchy?" cried the Duke, eagerly. "There may be really something in what you suspect. Here's a letter I have just received from La Sablonkoff: she's always keensighted and she thinks that the Court at Vienna is playing out here the game that they have not courage to attempt at Lombardy. What if this Wahlstein was a secret agent in the scheme — eh, Stubber?"

Stubber started with well-affected astonishment, and appeared as if astounded at the keen acuteness of the Duke's suggestion.

"Eh," cried his Highness, in evident delight. "That never occurred to you, Stubber. I'd wager there's not a man in the Duchy could have hit that plot but myself."

Stubber nodded sententiously, without a word.

"I never liked that fellow," resumed the Duke. "I always had my suspicion about that half reckless, wasteful manner he had. I know that I was alone in this opinion. Eh, Stubber? It never struck you?"

"Never! your Highness, never!" replied Stubber, frankly.

"I can't show you the Sablonkoff's letter, Stubber: there are certain private details for my own eye alone; but she speaks of a young sculptor at Carrara, a certain — Let me find his name. Ah! here it is — Sebastian Grippi — a young artist of promise, for whom she bespeaks our protection. Can you make him out, and let us see him!"

Stubber bowed in silence.

"I will give him an order for something. There's a pedestal in the flower garden where the Psyche stood. You remember, I smashed the Psyche, because it reminded me of Camella Monti. He shall design a figure for that place. I'd like a youthful Bacchus. I have a clever sketch of one somewhere, and it shall be tinted, slightly tinted. The Greeks always colored their statues. Strange enough, too; for, do you remark, Stubber, they never represented the iris of the eye, which the Romans invariably did; and yet, if you observe closely, you'll see that the eyelid implies the direction of the eye more accurately than in the Roman heads. I'm certain you never detected what I'm speaking of — eh, Stubber?"

Stubber candidly confessed that he had not; and listened patiently while his master descanted critically on the different styles of art, and his own especial tact and skill in discriminating between them.

"You'll look after these police returns then, Stubber," said he at last. "You'll let these people understand that we can suffice for the administration of our own Duchy. We neither want advice from Metternich, nor battalions from Radetzky. The laws here are open to every man; and if we have any claim to the gratitude of our people, it rests on our character for justice."

While he spoke with a degree of earnestness that indicated sincerity, there was something in the expression of his eye, — a half malicious drollery in its twinkle — that made it exceedingly difficult to say whether his words were uttered in honesty of purpose, or in mere mockery and derision. Whether Stubber rightly understood their import is more than we are able to say; but it is very probable that he was with all his shrewdness, mystified by one whose nature was a puzzle to himself.

"Let Marocchi return to Carrara. Say we have taken the matter into our own hands. Charge the brigadier in command of the gendarmerie there. Tell the canonico Baldetti that we look to him and his deacons for true reports of any movement that is plotting in the town. I take no steps with regard to Wahlstein for the present, but let him be closely watched. And then, Stubber,

send off an estafette to Pietro Santa for the ortolans, for I think we have earned our breakfast by all this attention to state affairs," and then, with a laugh, whose accents gave not the very faintest clue to its meaning, he lay back on his pillow again.

"And these two prisoners, your Highness, what is to be done with them?"

"Whatever you please, Stubber. Give them the third-class cross of Massa; or, a month's imprisonment, at your own good pleasure. Only no more business — no papers to sign — no schemes to unravel; and so, good night!" And the Chevalier retired at once from a presence which he well knew resented no injury so unmercifully as any invasion of the personal comfort.

#### CHAPTER XXX.

##### THE LIFE THEY LED AT MASSA.

It was with no small astonishment young Massy heard that he and his faithful follower were not alone restored to liberty, but that an order of his Highness had assigned them a residence in a portion of the palace, and a promise of future employment.

"This smacks of Turkish rather than of European rule," said the youth. "In prison yesterday — in a palace to-day. My own fortunes are wayward enough, heaven knows, not to require any additional ingredient of uncertainty. What think you, Traynor?"

"I'm thinkin'," said Billy, gravely, "that as the bastes of the field are guided by their instincts to objects that suit their natures, so man ought, by his reason, to be able to pilot himself in difficulties — choosin' this, avoidin' that — seein' by the eye of prophecy where a road would lead him, and makin' of what seem the accidents of life, steppin'-stones to fortune."

"In what way does your theory apply here?" cried the other. "How am I to guess whither this current may carry me?"

"At all events, there's no use wastin' your strength by swimmin' against it," rejoined Billy.

"To be the slave of some despot's whim — the tool of a caprice that may elevate me to-day, and to-morrow sentence me to the galleys. The object I have set before myself in life is to be independent. Is this, then, the road to it?"

"You're tryin' to be what no man ever was, or will be, to the world's end, then," said Billy. "Sure its the very nature and essence of our life here below, that we are dependant one on the other for kindness, for affection, for material help in time of difficulty, for counsel in time of doubt. The

rich man and the poor one have their mutual dependencies; and if it wasn't so, cowl-hearted and selfish as the world is, it would be five hundred times worse."

"You mistake my meaning," said Massy, sternly, "as you often do, to read me a lesson on a text of your own. When I spoke of independence, I meant freedom for the serfdom of another's charity. I would that my luck here, at least, should be of my own procuring."

"I get mine from *you*," said Traynor, calmly, "and never felt myself a slave on that account."

"Forgive me, my dear, kind friend. I could hate myself if I gave you a moment's pain. This temper of mine does not improve by time."

"There's one way to conquer it. Don't be broodin' on what's within. Don't be magnifyin' your evil fortunes to your own heart, till you come to think the world all little and yourself all great. Go out to your daily labor, whatever it be, with a stout spirit to do your best, and a thankful, grateful heart, that you are able to do it. Never let it out of your mind, that if there's many a one your inferior, winnin' his way up to fame and fortune before you, there's just as many better than you toilin' away unseen and unnoticed, wearin' out genius in a garret, and carryin' off a God-like intellect to an obscure grave!"

"You talk to me as though my crying sins were an overweening vanity," said the youth, half angrily.

"Well, it's one of them," said Billy; and the blunt frankness of the avowal threw the boy into a fit of laughing.

"You certainly do not intend to spoil me, Billy," said he, still laughing.

"Why would I do what so many is ready to do for nothing? What does the crowd that praise the work of a young man of genius care where they're leadin' him to? It's like people callin' out to a strong swimmer, 'Go out farther, and father — out to the open say, where the waves is rolling big, and the billows is roughest, that's worthy of you, in your strong might and your stout limbs. Lave the still water and the shallows to the weak and the puny. *Your* course is on the mountain wave, over the bottomless ocean.' It's little they think, if he's ever to get back again. 'Tis their boast and their pride that they said, 'Go on;' and when his cold corpse comes washed to shore, all they have is a word of derision and scorn for one who ventured beyond his powers."

"How you cool down one's ardor; with what pleasure you check every impulse that nerves one's heart for high daring!" said the youth, bitterly. "These eternal warn-



ings—these never-ending forebodings of failure—are sorry stimulants to energy.”

“Isn’t it better for you to have all your reverses at the hands of a crayture as humble as me?” said Billy, while the tears glistened in his eyes. “What good am I, except for this!”

In a moment the boy’s arms were around him, while he cried out:

“There; forgive me once more, and let me try if I cannot amend a temper that any but yourself had grown weary of correcting. I’ll work—I’ll labor—I’ll submit—I’ll accept the daily rubs of life, as others take them, and you shall be satisfied with me. We shall go back to all our old pursuits, my dear Billy. I’ll join all your ecstasies over Æschylus, and believe as much as I can of Herodotus, to please you. You shall lead me to all the wonders of the stars, and dazzle me with the brightness of visions that my intellect is lost in; and in revenge I only ask that you should sit with me in the studio, and read to me some of those old songs of Horace, that move the heart like old wine. Shall I own to you what it is which sways me thus uncertainly—jarring every cord of my existence, making my life a sea of stormy conflict? Shall I tell you?”

He grasped the other’s hand with both his own as he spoke, and while his lips quivered in strong emotion, went on.

“It is this, then. I cannot forget, do all that I will,—I cannot root out of my heart what I once believed myself to be. You know what I mean. Well, there it is still, like the sense of a wrong or foul injustice, as though I had been robbed and cheated of what never was mine! This contrast between the life my earliest hopes had pictured and that which I am destined to, never leaves me. All your teachings—and I have seen how devotedly you have addressed yourself to this lesson—have not eradicated from my nature the proud instincts that guided my childhood. Often and often have you warmed my blood by thoughts of a triumph to be achieved by me hereafter—how men should recognize me as a genius, and elevate me to honors and rewards; and yet would I barter such success, ten thousand times told, for an hour of that high station that comes by birth alone, independent of all effort—the heirloom of deeds chronicled centuries back, whose actors have been dust for ages. That is real pride,” cried he, enthusiastically, “and has no alloy of the petty vanity that mingles with the sense of a personal triumph.”

Traynor hung his head heavily as the youth spoke, and a gloomy melancholy settled on his features: the sad conviction came home to him of all his counsels being fruit-

less—all his teachings in vain; and as the boy sat wrapt in a wild dreamy reverie of ancestral greatness, the humble peasant brooded darkly over the troubles, such a temperament might evoke.

“It is agreed that”—cried Massy, suddenly, “that we are to accept of this great man’s bounty, live under his roof, and eat his bread. Well, I accede—as well his as another’s. Have you seen the home they destine for us?”

“Yes; it’s a real paradise, and in a garden that would beat Adam’s, now,” exclaimed Traynor; “for there’s marble fountains, and statues, and temples, and grottoes in it; and it’s as big as a parish, and as wild as a wilderness. And better than all, there’s a little pathway leads to a private stair that goes up into the library of the palace—a spot nobody ever enters, and where you may study the whole day long without hearin’ a footstep. All the books is there that ever was written, and manuscripts without end besides; and the minister says I’m to have my own key, and go in and out whenever I please; ‘And if there’s anything wantin’,” says he, “just order it on a slip of paper and send it to me, and you’ll have it at once.’ When I asked if I ought to spake to the librarian himself, he only laughed, and said, ‘That’s me; but I’m never there. Take my word for it, doctor, you’ll have the place to yourself.’”

He spoke truly: Billy Traynor had indeed to himself. There, the grey dawn of morning and the last shadows of evening ever found him, seated in one of those deep, cell-like recesses of the windows; the table, the seats, the very floor littered with volumes, which, revelling in the luxury of wealth, he had accumulated around him. His greedy avidity for knowledge knew no bounds. The miser’s thirst for gold was weak in comparison with that intense craving that seized upon him. Historians, critics, satirists, poets, dramatists, metaphysicians, never came amiss to a mind bent on acquiring. The life he led was like the realization of a glorious dream—the calm repose, the perfect stillness of the spot, the boundless stores that lay about him; the growing sense of power, as day by day his intellect expanded, new vistas opened themselves before him, and new and unproved sources of pleasure sprung up in his nature. The never-ending variety gave a zest, too, to his labors that averted all weariness; and at last he divided his time ingeniously, alternating grave and difficult subjects with lighter topics—making, as he said himself, “Aristophanes digest Plato.”

And what of young Massy all this while? His life was a dream, too, but of another and very different kind. Visions of a glori-

ous future, attended with sad and depressing thoughts; high darings, and hopeless views of what lay before him, came and went, and went and came again. The Duke, who had just taken his departure for some watering-place in Germany, gave him an order for certain statues, the models for which were to be ready by his return—at least, in that sketchy state of which clay is even more susceptible than canvas. The young artist chafed and fretted under the restraint of an assigned task. It was gall to his haughty nature to be told that his genius should accept dictation, and his fancy be fettered by the suggestions of another. If he tried to combat this rebellious spirit, and addressed himself steadily to labor, he found that his imagination grew sluggish and his mind uncreative. The sense of servitude oppressed him; and though he essayed to subdue himself to the condition of an humble artist, the old pride still rankled in his heart, and spirited him to a haughty resistance. His days thus passed over in vain attempts to work, or still more unprofitable lethargy. He lounged through the deserted garden, or lay half dreamily in the long deep grass, listening to the cicada or watching the emerald-backed lizards as they lay basking in the sun. He drank in all the soft voluptuous influences of a climate which steeped the senses in a luxurious stupor, making the commonest existence a toil, but giving to mere indolence all the zest of a rich enjoyment. Sometimes he wandered into the library, and noiselessly drew nigh the spot where Billy sat deeply busied in his books. He would gaze silently, half curiously, at the poor fellow, and then steal silently away, pondering on the blessings of that poor peasant's nature, and wondering what in his own organization had denied him the calm happiness of this humble man's life.



## CHAPTER XXXI.

AT MASSA.

BILLY TRAYNOR sat, deeply sunk in study, in the old recess of the palace library. A passage in the *Antigone* had puzzled him, and the table was littered with critics and commentators, while manuscript notes, scrawled in the most rude hand, lay on every side. He did not perceive, in his intense pre-occupation, that Massy had entered and taken the place directly in front of him. There the youth sat, gazing steadfastly at the patient and studious features before him. It was only when Traynor, mastering the difficulty that had so long opposed him, broke out into an enthusiastic declamation of the text, that Massy, unable to control the impulse, laughed aloud.

"How long are you there? I never noticed you comin' in," said Billy, half-shamed by his detected ardor.

"But a short time. I was wondering at—ay, Billy—and was envying, too, the concentrated power in which you address yourself to your task. It is the real secret of all success, and somehow it is a frame of mind I cannot achieve."

"How is the boy Bacchus goin' on?" asked Billy, eagerly.

"I broke him up yesterday, and it is like a weight off my heart that his curly bullet-head and sensual lips are not waiting for me as I enter the studio."

"And the Cleopatra?" asked Traynor, still more anxiously.

"Smashed—destroyed. Shall I own to you, Billy, I see at last myself what you have so often hinted to me—I have no genius for the work."

"I never said—I never thought so," cried the other; "I only insisted that nothing was to be done without labor—hard, unflinching labor—that easy successes were poor triumphs, and bore no results."

"There—there—I'll hear that sermon no more. I'd not barter the freedom of my own unfettered thoughts, as they come and go, in hours of listless idleness, for all the success you ever promised me. There are men toil elevates—me it wears to depression, and brings no compensation in the shape of increased power. Mine is an unrewarding clay—that's the whole of it. Cultivation only develops the rank weeds which are deep-sown in the soil. I'd like to travel—to visit some new land—some scene where all association with the past should be broken. What say you?"

"I'm ready, and at your orders," said Traynor, closing his book.

"East or west, then, which shall it be? If some time my heart yearns for the glori-

ous scenes of Palestine, full of memories that alone satisfy the soul's longings—there are days when I pant for the solitude of the vast savannahs of the new world. I feel as if to know oneself thoroughly, one's nature should be tested by the perils and exigencies of a life hourly making some demand on courage and ingenuity. The hunter's life does this. What say you—shall we try it?"

"I am ready," was the calm reply.

"We have means for such an enterprise—have we not? You told me, some short time past, that nearly the whole of our last year's allowance was untouched."

"Yes, it's all there to the good," said Billy; "a good round sum too."

"Let us get rid of all needless equipment, then," cried Massy, "and only retain what befits a prairie life. Sell everything, or give it away at once."

"Leave all that to me—I'll manage everything—only say when you make up your mind."

"But it is made up. I have resolved on the step. Few can decide so readily—for I leave neither home nor country behind."

"Don't say that," burst in Billy: "here's myself, the poorest crature that walks the earth, that never knew where he was born or who nursed him, yet even to me there's the tie of a native land—there's the soil that reared warriors and poets and orators, that I heard of when a child, and gloried in as a man; and better than that, there's the green meadows and the leafy valleys where kind-hearted men and women live and labor, spakin' our own tongue and feelin' our own feelins, and that, if we saw to-morrow, we'd know were our own—heart and hand our own. The smell of the yellow furze, under a griddle of oaten bread, would be sweeter to me than all the gales of Araby the blest, for it would remind me of the hearth I had my share of, and the roof that covered me, when I was alone in the world."

The boy buried his face in his hands and made no answer. At last raising up his head, he said:

"Let us try this life; let us see if action be not better than mere thought. The efforts of intellect seem to inspire a thirst there is no slaking. Sleep brings no rest after them. I long for the sense of some strong peril, which, over, gives the proud feeling of a goal reached—a feat accomplished."

"I'll go wherever you like—I'll be whatever you want me," said Billy affectionately.

"Let us lose no time, then. I would not that my present ardor should cool ere we

have begun our plan. What day is this? The seventh. Well, on the eighteenth there is a ship sails from Genoa for Porta Rica. It was the announcement set my heart a-thinking of the project. I dreamed of it two entire nights. I fancied myself walking the deck on a star-lit night, and framing all my projects for the future. The first thing I saw the next morning was the same large placard. 'The Colombo will sail for Porta Rica, on Friday the eighteenth.'

"An unlucky day," muttered Billy, interrupting.

"I have fallen upon few that were otherwise," said Massy, gloomily; "besides," he added after a pause, "I have no faith in omens, or any care for superstitions. Come, let us set about our preparations. Do you bethink you how to rid ourselves of all useless incumbrances here: Be it *my* care to jot down the list of all we shall need for the voyage and the life to follow it. Let us see which displays most zeal for the new enterprise."

Billy Traynor addressed himself with a will to the duty allotted to him. He rummaged through drawers and desks, destroyed papers and letters, laid aside all the article which he judged suitable for preservation, and then hastened off to the studio to arrange for the disposal of the few "studies"—for they were scarcely more—which remained of Massy's labors.

A nearly finished Faun, the head of a Niobe, the arm and hand of a Jove launching a thunderbolt, the torso of a dead sailor after shipwreck, lay amid fragments of shattered figures, grotesque images, some caricatures of his own works, and crude models of anatomy. The walls were scrawled with charcoal drawings of groups—one day to be fashioned in sculpture—with verses from Dante, or lines from Tasso, inscribed beneath; proud resolves to a life of labor figured beside stanzas in praise of indolence and dreamy abandonment. There were passages of Scripture, too, glorious bursts of the poetic rapture of the Psalms—intermingled with quaint remarks on life from Jean Paul or Herder. All that a discordant, incoherent nature consisted of was there in some shape or other depicted; and as Billy ran his eye over this curious journal—for such it was—he grieved over the spirit which had dictated it.

The whole object of all his teaching had been to give a purpose to this uncertain and wavering nature, and yet everything showed him now that he had failed. The blight which had destroyed the boy's early fortunes still worked its evil influences, poisoning every healthful effort, and dashing, with a sense

of shame, every successful step towards fame and honor.

"Maybe he's right, after all," muttered Billy to himself. "The new world is the only place for those who have not the roots of an ancient stock to hold them in the old. Men can be there whatever is in them, and they can be judged without the prejudices of a class."

Having summed up as it were his own doubts in this remark, he proceeded with his task. While he was thus occupied, Massy entered and threw himself into a chair.

"There, you may give it up, Traynor. Fate is ever against us, do and decide on what we will. Your confounded omen of a Friday was right this time."

"What do you mean? Have you altered your mind?"

"I expected you to say so," said the other, bitterly. "I knew that I should meet with this mockery of my resolution, but it is uncalled for. It is not *I* that have changed!"

"What is it then has happened—do they refuse your passport?"

"Not that either; I never got so far as to ask for it. The misfortune is in this wise: on going to the bank to learn the sum that lay to my credit and draw for it, I was met by the reply, that I had nothing there—not a shilling. Before I could demand how this could be the case, the whole truth suddenly flashed across my memory, and I recalled to mind how one night, as I lay awake, the thought occurred to me, that it was base and dishonorable in me, now that I was come to manhood, to accept of the means of life from one who felt shame in my connection with him. Why, thought I, is there to be the bond of dependence where there is no tie of affection to soften its severity? And so I arose from my bed, and wrote to Sir Horace, saying, that by the same post I should remit to his banker at Naples whatever remained of my last year's allowance, and declined in future to accept of any further assistance. This I did the same day, and never told you of it—partly, lest you should try to oppose me in my resolve, partly," and here his voice faltered, "to spare myself the pain of revealing my motives. And now that I have buoyed my heart up with this project, I find myself without means to attempt it. Not that I regret my act or would recall it," cried he, proudly, "but that the sudden disappointment is hard to bear. I was feeding my hopes with such projects for the future when this stunning news met me, and the thought that I am now chained here by necessity has become a torture."



"What answer did Sir Horace give to your letter?" asked Billy.

"I forget; I believe he never replied to it, or if he did, I have no memory of what he said. Stay—there was a letter of his taken from me when I was arrested at Carrara. The seal was unbroken."

"I remember the letter was given to the minister, who has it still in his keeping."

"What care I," cried Massy, angrily, "in whose hands it may be?"

"The minister is not here now," said Billy, half-speaking to himself; "he is travelling with the duke, but when he comes back—"

"When he comes back!" burst in Massy, impatiently; "with what calm philosophy you look forward to a remote future. I tell you that this scheme is now a part and parcel of my very existence. I can turn to no other project or journey no other road in life, till at least I shall have tried it!"

"Well, it is going to work in a more humble fashion," said Billy, calmly. "Leave me to dispose of all these odds and ends here—"

"This trash!" cried the youth fiercely. "Who would accept it as a gift?"

"Don't disparage it; there are signs of genius even in these things; but above all, don't meddle with me, but just leave me free to follow my own way. There now, go back and employ yourself preparing for the road—trust the rest to me."

Massy obeyed without speaking. It was not, indeed, that he ventured to believe in Traynor's resources, but he was indisposed to further discussion, and longed to be in solitude once more.

It was late at night when they met again. Charles Massy was seated at a window of his room, looking out into the starry blue of a cloudless sky, when Traynor sat down beside him. "Well," said he, gently, "it's all done and finished. I have sold off everything, and if you will only repair the hand of the Faun, which I broke in removing, there's nothing more wanting."

"That much can be done by any one," said Massy, haughtily. "I hope never to set eyes on the trumpery things again."

"But I have promised you would do it," said Traynor, eagerly.

"And how—by what right could you pledge yourself for my labor? Nay," cried he, suddenly changing the tone in which he spoke, "knowing my wilful nature, how could you answer for what I might or might not do?"

"I knew," said Billy, slowly, "that you had a great project in your head, and that to enable you to attempt it, you would scorn to throw all the toil upon another."

"I never said I was ashamed of labor," said the youth, reddening with shame.

"If you had, I would despair of you altogether," rejoined the other.

"Well, what is it that I have to do?" said Massy, blantly.

"It is to remodel the arm; for I don't think you can mend it; but you'll see it yourself."

"Where is the figure?—In the studio?"

"No; it is in a small pavilion of a villa just outside the gates. It was while I was conveying it there it met this misfortune. There's the name of the villa on that card. You'll find the garden gate open, and by taking the path through the olive wood you'll be there in a few minutes; for I must go over to-morrow to Carrara with the Niobe; the Academy has bought it for a model."

A slight start of surprise and a faint flush bespoke the proud astonishment with which he heard of this triumph; but he never spoke a word.

"If you had any pride in your works, you'll be delighted to see where the Faun is to be placed. It is in a garden, handsomer even than this here, with terraces rising one over the other, and looking out on the blue sea, from the golden strand of Via Reggia down to the headlands above Spezia. The great olive wood in the vast plain lies at your feet, and the white cliffs of Serravezza behind you."

"What care I for all this?" said Massy, gloomily. "Benvenuto could afford to be in love with his own works—I cannot!"

Traynor saw at once the mood of mind he was in, and stole noiselessly away to his room.

#### CHAPTER XXXII.

##### THE PAVILION IN THE GARDEN.

CHARLES MASSY, dressed in the blouse of his daily labor, and with the tools of his craft in his hand, set out early in search of the garden indicated by Billy Traynor. A sense of hope that it was for the last time he was to exercise his art, that a new and more stirring existence was now about to open before him, made his step lighter and his spirits higher as he went. "Once amid the deep woods and on the wide plains of the New World, and I shall dream no more of what judgment men may pass upon my efforts. There, if I suffice to myself, I have no other ordeal to meet. Perils may try me, but not the whims and tastes of other men."

Thus fancying an existence of unbounded freedom and unfettered action, he speedily traversed the olive wood, and, almost ere he knew it, found himself within the garden. The gorgeous profusion of beautiful flowers, the graceful grouping of shrubs, the richly-

perfumed air, loaded with a thousand odors, first awoke him from his day-dream, and he stood amazed in the midst of a scene surpassing all that he had ever conceived of loveliness. From the terrace, where under a vine trellis he was standing, he could perceive others above him rising on the mountain side, while some beneath descended towards the sea, which, blue as a turquoise, lay basking and glittering below. A stray white sail or so was to be seen, but there was barely wind to shake the olive leaves, and rouse the odors of the orange and the oleander. It was yet too early for the hum of insect life, and the tricklings of the tiny fountains that sprinkled the flower-beds were the only sounds in the stillness. It was in color, outline, effect, and shadow a scene such as only Italy can present, and Massy drank in all its influences with an eager delight.

"Were I a rich man," said he, "I would buy this paradise. What in all the splendor of man's invention can compare with the gorgeous glory of this flowery carpet? What frescoed ceiling could vie with these wide-leaved palms, interlaced with these twining acacias, with glimpses of the blue sky breaking through? And for a mirror, there lies nature's own—the great blue ocean! What a life were it, to linger days and hours here, amid such objects of beauty, having one's thoughts ever upwards, and making in imagination a world of which these should be the types. The faintest fancies that could float across the mind in such an existence would be pleasures more real, more tangible, than ever were felt in the tamer life of the actual world."

Loitering along, he at length came upon the little temple which served as a studio, on entering which he found his own statue enshrined in the place of honor. Whether it was the frame of mind in which he chanced to be, or that place and light had some share in the result, for the first time the figure struck him as good, and he stood long gazing at his own work with the calm eye of the critic. At length detecting, as he deemed, some defects in design, he drew nigh, and began to correct them. There are moments in which the mind attains the highest and clearest perception—seasons in which, whatever the nature of the mental operation, the faculties address themselves readily to the task, and labor becomes less a toil than an actual pleasure. This was such. Massy worked on for hours; his conceptions grew rapidly under his hand into bold realities, and he saw that he was succeeding. It was not alone that he had imparted a more graceful and lighter beauty to his statue, but he felt within himself the

promptings of a spirit that grew with each new suggestion of its own. Efforts that before had seemed above him he now essayed boldly; difficulties that once had appeared insurmountable he now encountered with courageous daring. Thus striving he lost all sense of fatigue. Hunger and exhaustion were alike unremembered, and it was already late in the afternoon, as, overcome by continued toil, he threw himself heavily down, and sank off into a deep sleep.

It was nigh sunset as he awoke. The distant bell of a monastery was ringing the hour of evening prayer, the solemn chime of the "Venti quattro," as he leaned on his arm and gazed in astonishment around him. The whole seemed like a dream. On every side were objects new and strange to his eyes. Casts and models he had never seen before; busts and statues and studies, all unknown to him. At last his eyes rested on the Faun, and he remembered at once where he was. The languor of excessive fatigue still oppressed him, however, and he was about to lie back again in sleep, when, bending gently over him, a young girl, with a low, soft accent, asked if he felt ill, or only tired.

Massy gazed, without speaking, at features regular as the most classic model, and whose paleness almost gave them the calm beauty of the marble. His steady stare slightly colored her cheek, and made her voice falter a little as she repeated her question.

"I scarcely know," said he, sighing heavily. "I feel as though this were a dream, and I am afraid to awaken from it."

"Let me give you some wine," said she, bending down to hand him the glass: "you have over-fatigued yourself. The Faun is by your hand—is it not?"

He nodded a slow assent.

"Whence did you derive that knowledge of ancient art?" said she, eagerly; "your figure has the light elasticity of the classic models, and yet nothing strained or exaggerated in attitude. Have you studied at Rome?"

"I could do better now," said the youth, as, rising on his elbow, he strained his eyes to examine her. "I could achieve a real success."

A deep flush covered her face at these words, so palpably alluding to herself, and she tried to repeat her question.

"No," said he, "I cannot say I have ever studied: all that I have done is full of faults; but I feel the spring of better things within me. Tell me, is this *your* home?"

"Yes," said she, smiling faintly. "I live in the villa here with my aunt. She has purchased your statue and wishes you to



repair it, and then to engage in some other work for her. Let me assist you to rise; you seem very weak."

"I am weak, and weary, too," said he, staggering to a seat. "I have over-worked myself, perhaps—I scarcely know. Do not take away your hand."

"And you are, then, the Sebastian Greppi, of whom Carrara is so proud?"

"They call me Sebastian Greppi; but I never heard that my name was spoken of with any honor."

"You are unjust to your own fame. We have often heard of you. See, here are two models taken from your works. They have been my studies for many a day. I have often wished to see you, and ask if my attempt were rightly begun. Then here is a hand."

"Let me model yours," said the youth, gazing steadfastly at the beautifully-shaped one which rested on the chair beside him.

"Come with me to the villa, and I will present you to my aunt; she will be pleased to know you. There, lean on my arm, for I see you are very weak."

"Why are you so kind—so good to me?" said he, faintly, while a tear rose slowly to his eye. "I am so unused to such!"

He arose, tottering, and taking her arm, walked slowly along at her side. As they went, she spoke kindly and encouragingly to him, praised what she had seen of his works, and said how frequently she had wished to know him, and enjoy the benefit of his counsels in art. "For I, too," said she, laughing, "would be a sculptor."

The youth stopped to gaze at her with a rapture he could not control. That one of such a station, surrounded by all the appliances of a luxurious existence, could devote herself to the toil and labor of art, implied an amount of devotion and energy that at once elevated her in his esteem. She blushed deeply at his continued stare, and turned at last away.

"O, do not feel offended with me," cried he, passionately. "If you but knew how your words have relighted within me the dying-out embers of an almost exhausted ambition—if you but knew how my heart has gained courage and hope—how light and brightness have shone in upon me after hours and days of gloom! It was but yesterday I had resolved to abandon this career forever. I was bent on a new life, in a new world beyond the seas. These few things, that a faithful companion of mine had charged himself to dispose of, were to supply the means of the journey; and now I think of it no more. I shall remain here to work hard, and study, and try to achieve what may one day be called good. You will

sometimes deign to see what I am doing, to tell me if my efforts are on the road to success, to give me hope when I am weak-hearted and courage when I am faint. I know and feel," said he, proudly, "that I am not devoid of what accomplishes success, for I can toil, and toil, and throw my whole soul into my work; but for this I need, at least, one who shall watch me with an eye of interest, glorying when I win, sorrowing when I am defeated. Where are we? What palace is this?" cried he, as they crossed a spacious hall, paved with porphyry and Sienna marble.

"This is my home," said the girl, "and this is its mistress."

Just as she spoke, she presented the youth to a lady, who, reclined on a sofa beside a window, gazed out towards the sea. She turned suddenly, and fixed her eyes on the stranger. With a wild start, she sprang up, and staring eagerly at him, cried, "Who is this? Where does he come from?"

The young girl told his name and what he was; but the words did not fall on listening ears, and the lady sat like one spell-bound, with eyes rivetted on the youth's face.

"Am I like any one you have known, Signora?" asked he, as he read the effect his presence had produced in her. "Do I recall some other features?"

"You do," said she, reddening painfully.

"And the memory is not of pleasure?" added the youth.

"Far, far from it—it is the saddest and cruellest of all my life," muttered she, half to herself.

"What part of Italy are you from?—your accent is southern."

"It is the accent of Naples, Signora," said he, evading her question.

"And your mother, was she Neapolitan?"

"I know little of my birth, Signora. It is a theme I would not be questioned on."

"And you are a sculptor?"

"The artist of the Faun, dearest aunt," broke in the girl, who watched with intense anxiety the changing expressions of the youth's features.

"Your voice even more than your features brings up the past," said the lady, as a deadly pallor spread over her own face, and her lips trembled as she spoke. "Will you not tell me something of your history?"

"When you have told me the reason for which you ask it, perhaps I may," said the youth, half sternly.

"There—there," cried she, wildly, "in every tone, in every gesture, I trace this resemblance. Come nearer to me—let me see your hands."

"They are seamed and hardened with toil, lady," said the youth, as he showed them.

"And yet they look as if there was a time when they did not know labor," said she, eagerly.

An impatient gesture, as if he would not endure a continuance of this questioning, stopped her, and she said, in a faint tone:

"I ask your pardon for all this. My excuse and my apology are, that your features have recalled a time of sorrow more vividly than any words could do. Your voice, too, strengthens the illusion. It may be a mere passing impression; I hope and pray it is such. Come, Ida; come with me. Do not leave this, sir, till we speak with you again." So saying, she took her niece's arm and left the room.

#### CHAPTER XXXIII.

##### NIGHT THOUGHTS.

It was with a proud consciousness of having well fulfilled his mission that Billy Traynor once more bent his steps towards Massa. Besides providing himself with books of travel and maps of the regions they were about to visit, he had ransacked Genoa for weapons, and accoutrements, and horse gear. Well knowing the youth's taste for the costly and the splendid, he had suffered himself to be seduced into the purchase of a gorgeously embroidered saddle-mounting, and a rich bridle, in Mexican taste: a pair of splendid mounted pistols chased in gold, and studded with large turquoises, with a Damascus sabre, the hilt of which was a miracle of fine workmanship, were also amongst his acquisitions; and poor Billy fed his imagination with the thought of all the delight these objects were certain to produce. In this way he never wearied admiring them, and a dozen times a-day would he unpack them, just to gratify his mind by picturing the enjoyment they were to afford.

"How well you are lookin', my dear boy," cried he, as he burst into the youth's room, and threw his arms around him; "'tis like ten years off my life to see you so fresh and so hearty. Is it the prospect of the glorious time before us that has given this new spring to your existence?"

"More likely it is the pleasure I feel in seeing you back again," said Massy, and his cheek grew crimson as he spoke.

"'Tis too good you are to me—too good," said Billy, and his eyes ran over in tears, while he turned away his head to hide his emotion; "but sure it is part of yourself I do be growing every day I live. At first I couldn't bear the thought of going away to live in exile, in a wilderness, as one may say; but now that I see your heart set upon it, and that your vigor and strength comes back just by the mere anticipation of it I'm downright delighted with the land."

"Indeed!" said the youth, dreamily.

"To be sure I am," resumed Billy, "and I do be thinking there's a kind of poetry in carrying away into the solitary pine-forest minds stored with classic lore, to be able to read one's Horace beside the gushin' stream that flows on nameless and unknown, and con over that ould fable book, Herodotus, amidst adventures stranger than ever he told himself."

"It might be a happy life," said the other, slowly, almost moodily.

"Ay, and it will be," said Billy, confidently. "Think of yourself, mounted on that saddle on a wild prairie horse, galloping free as the wind itself over the wide savannahs, with a drove of rushing buffaloes in career before you, and so eager in pursuit that you won't stop to bring down the scarlet-winged bustard that swings on the branch above you. There they go, plungin' and snortin', the mad devils, with a force that would sweep a fortress before them; and here are we after them, makin' the dark woods echo again with our wild yells. That's what will warm up our blood, till we'll not be afraid to meet an army of dragoons themselves. Them pistols once belonged to Cariatoké, a chief from Scio; and that blade—a real Damascus—was worn by an Aga of the Janissaries. Isn't it a picture?"

The youth poised the sword in his hand, and laid it down without a word; while Billy continued to stare at him with an expression of intensest amazement.

"Is it that you don't care for it all now, that your mind is changed, and that you don't wish for the life we were talkin' over these three weeks? Say so at once, my own darlin', and here I am, ready and willin' never to think more of it. Only tell me what's passin' in your heart—I ask no more."

"I scarcely know it myself," said the youth. "I feel as though in a dream, and know not what is real and what fiction."

"How have you passed your time?—What were you doin' while I was away?"

"Dreaming, I believe," said the other, with a sigh. "Some embers of my old ambition warmed up into a flame once more, and I fancied that there was that in me that by toil and labor might yet win upwards; and that, if so, this mere life of action would but bring repining and regret, and that I should feel as one who chose the meaner casket of fate, when both were within my reach."

"So you were at work again in the studio?"

"I have been finishing the arm of the Faun in that pavilion outside the town." A flush of crimson covered his face as he spoke,



which Billy as quickly noticed, but misinterpreted.

"Ay, and they praised you, I'd be bound. They said it was the work of one whose genius would place him with the great ones of art, and that he who could do this while scarcely more than a boy, might in riper years be the great name of his century. Did they not tell you so?"

"No; not that, not that," said the other, slowly.

"Then they bade you go on, and strive and labor hard to develop into life the seeds of that glorious gift that was in you?"

"Nor that," sighed the youth, heavily, while a faint spot of crimson burned on one cheek, and a feverish lustre lit up his eye.

"They didn't dispraise what you done! did they?" broke in Billy. "They could not if they wanted to do it; but sure there's nobody would have the cruel heart to blight the ripenin' bud of genius—to throw gloom over a spirit that has to struggle against its own misgivin's?"

"You wrong them, my dear friend; their words were all kindness and affection. They gave me hope and encouragement too. They fancy that I have in me what will one day grow into fame itself; and even you, Billy, in your most sanguine hopes, have never dreamed of greater success for me than they have predicted in the calm of a moonlit saunter."

"May the saints in heaven reward them for it!" said Billy; and in his clasped hands and uplifted eyes was all the fervor of a prayer. "They have my best blessin' for their goodness," muttered he to himself.

"And so I am again a sculptor!" said Massy, rising and walking the room. "Upon this career my whole heart and soul are henceforth to be concentrated; my fame, my happiness are to be those of the artist. From this day and this hour let every thought of what—not what I once was, but what I had hoped to be, be banished from my heart. I am Sebastian Greppi. Never let another name escape your lips to me. I will not, even for a second, turn from the path in which my own exertions are to win the goal. Let the far away land of my infancy, its traditions, its associations, be but dreams for evermore. Forwards! forwards!" cried he, passionately, "not a glance, not a look, towards the past."

Billy stared with admiration at the youth, over whose features a glow of enthusiasm was now diffused, and in broken, unconnected words, spoke encouragement and good cheer.

"I know well," said the youth, "how this same stubborn pride must be rooted out—how these false, deceitful visions of a

stand and a station that I am never to attain, must give place to nobler and higher aspirations; and you, my dearest friend, must aid me in all this—unceasingly, unwearily, reminding me that to myself alone must I look for anything; and that, if I would have a country, a name, or a home, it is by the toil of this head and these hands they are to be won. My plan is this," said he, eagerly seizing the other's arm, and speaking with immense rapidity: "A life not alone of labor, but of the simplest: not a luxury, not an indulgence; our daily meals the humblest, our dress the commonest, nothing that to provide shall demand a moment's forethought or care; no wants that shall turn our thoughts from this great object, no care for the requirements that others need. Thus mastering small ambitions and petty desires, we shall concentrate all our faculties in our art; and even the humblest may thus outstrip those whose higher gifts reject such discipline."

"You'll not live longer under the Duke's patronage then?" said Traynor.

"Not an hour. I return to that garden no more. There's a cottage on the mountain road to Serravezza will suit us well: it stands alone, and on an eminence, with a view over the plain and the sea beyond. You can see it from the door. There, to the left of the olive wood, lower down than the old ruin. We'll live there, Billy, and we'll make of that mean spot a hallowed one, where young enthusiasts in art will come, years hence, when we have passed away, to see the humble home Sebastian lived in—to sit upon the grassy seat where he once sat, when dreaming of the mighty triumphs that have made him glorious." A wild burst of mocking laughter rung from the boy's lips as he said this; but its accents were less in derision of the boast, than a species of hysterical ecstasy at the vision he had conjured up.

"And why wouldn't it be so?" exclaimed Billy, ardently—"why wouldn't you be great and illustrious?"

The moment of excitement was now over, and the youth stood pale, silent, and almost sickly in appearance: great drops of perspiration, too, stood on his forehead, and his quivering lips were bloodless.

"These visions are like meteor streaks," said he, falteringly; "they leave the sky blacker than they found it! But come along, let us to work, and we'll soon forget mere speculation."

Of the life they now led each day exactly resembled the other. Rising early, the youth was in his studio at dawn; the faithful Billy, seated near, read for him while he worked. Watching, with a tact that only

affection ever bestows, each changeful mood of the youth's mind, Traynor varied the topics with the varying humors of the other, and thus little of actual conversation took place between them, though their minds journeyed along together. To eke out subsistence even humble as theirs, the young sculptor was obliged to make small busts and even figures for sale, and these Billy disposed of at Lucca and Pisa, making short excursions to these cities as need required.

The toil of the day over, they wandered out towards the sea-shore, taking the path which led through the olive road by the garden of the villa. At times the youth would steal away a moment from his companion, and enter the little park, with every avenue of which he was familiar; and although Billy noticed his absence, he strictly abstained from the slightest allusion to it. Even at last, as he delayed longer and longer to return, Traynor maintained the same reserve, and thus there grew up gradually a secret between them—a mystery that neither ventured to approach. With a delicacy that seemed an instinct in his humble nature, Billy would now and then feign occupation or fatigue to excuse himself from the evening stroll, and thus leave the youth free to wander as he wished; till at length it became a settled habit between them to separate at nightfall, to meet only on the morrow. These nights were spent in walking the garden around the villa, sitting stealthily amid the trees to watch the room where she was sitting, to catch a momentary glimpse of her figure as it passed the window, to hear perchance a few faint accents of her voice. Hours long would he so watch in the silent night, his whole soul steeped in a delicious dream wherein her image moved, and came and went, with every passing fancy. In the calm moonlight he would try to trace her footsteps in the gravel walk that led to the studio, and, lingering near them, whisper to her words of love.

One night, as he loitered thus, he thought he was perceived, for as he suddenly emerged from a dark alley into a broad space where the moonlight fell strongly, he saw a figure in a terrace above him, but without being able to recognize to whom it belonged. Timidly and fearfully he retired within the shade, and crept noiselessly away, shocked at the very thought of discovery. The next day he found a small bouquet of fresh flowers on the rustic seat beneath the window. At first he scarcely dared to touch it; but with a sudden flash of hope that it had been destined for himself, he pressed the flowers to his lips, and hid them in his bosom. Each night now the same present attracted him to the same place, and thus at once

within his heart was lighted a flame of hope that illuminated all his being, making his whole life a glorious episode, and filling all the long hours of the day with thoughts of her who thus could think of him.

Life has its triumphant moments, its dreams of entrancing, ecstatic delight, when success has crowned a hard-fought struggle, or when the meed of other men's praise comes showered on us. The triumphs of heroism, of intellect, of noble endurance—the trials of temptation met and conquered—the glorious victory over self interest—are all great and ennobling sensations; but what are they all compared with the first consciousness of being loved, of being to another the ideal we have made of her? To this nothing the world can give is equal. From the moment we have felt it, life changes around us. Its crosses are but barriers opposed to our strong will, that to assail and storm is a duty. Then comes a heroism in meeting the every-day troubles of existence, as though we were soldiers in a good and holy cause. No longer unseen or unmarked in the great ocean of life, we feel there is an eye ever turned towards us, a heart ever throbbing with our own—that our triumphs are its triumphs—our sorrows its sorrows. Apart from all the intercourse with the world, wish its changeful good and evil, we feel that we have a treasure that dangers cannot approach; we know that in our heart of hearts a blessed mystery is locked up—a well of pure thoughts that can calm down the most fevered hour of life's anxieties. Such the youth felt, and, feeling it, was happy.

## CHAPTER XXXIV.

## A MINISTER'S LETTER.

“BRITISH LEGATION, NAPLES, }  
Nov. —, 18—.

“*My dear Harcourt,*—

“Not mine the fault that your letter has lain six weeks unanswered; but having given up penwork myself for the last eight months, and Crawley, my private sec. being ill, the delay was unavoidable. The present communication you owe to the fortunate arrival here of Captain Mellish, who has kindly volunteered to be my amanuensis. I am indeed sorely grieved at this delay. I shall be *desolé* if it occasion you anything beyond inconvenience. How a private sec. should permit himself the luxury of an attack of influenza I cannot conceive. We shall hear of one's hairdresser having the impertinence to catch cold, to-morrow or next day!

“If I don't mistake, it was you yourself recommended Crawley to me, and I am only half grateful for the service. He is a man



of small prejudices ; fancies that he ought to have a regular hour for dinner ; thinks that he should have acquaintances ; and will persist in imagining himself an existent something, appertaining to the legation,—while in reality he is only a shadowy excrescence of my own indolent habits, the recipient of the trashy superfluities one commits to paper, and calls dispatches. Latterly, in my increasing laziness, I have used him for more intimate correspondence ; and, as Doctor Allimore has now denied me all manual exertion whatever, I am actually wholly dependent on such aid. I'm sure I long for the discovery of some other mode of transmitting one's brain-efforts than by the slow process of manuscript—some photographic process, that by a series of bright pictures might display *en tableau* what one is now reduced to accomplish by narrative. As it ever did, and ever will happen, too, they have deluged me with work when I crave rest. Every session of parliament must have its blue book ; and by the devil's luck they have decided that Italy is to furnish the present one.

“ You have always been a soldier, and whenever your inspecting general came his round, your whole care has been to make the troop horses look as fat, the men's whiskers as trim, their overalls as clean, and their curb-chains as bright, as possible. You never imagined or dreamed of a contingency when it would be desirable that the animals should be all sorebacked, the whole regiment under stoppages, and the trumpeter in a quinsey. Had you been a diplomatist instead of a dragoon, this view of things might perhaps have presented itself, and the chief object of your desire been to show that the system under which you functionated worked as ill as need be ; that the court to which you were accredited abhorred you ; its ministers snubbed, its small officials slighted you ; that all your communications were ill received, your counsels ill taken ; that what you reprobated was adopted, what you advised rejected ; in fact, that the only result of your presence was the maintenance of a perpetual ill will and bad feeling ; and that, without the aid of a line of battle ship, or at least a frigate, your position was no longer tenable. From the moment, my dear H——, that you can establish this fact, you start into life as an able and active minister, imbued with thoroughly British principles—an active asserter of what is due to his country's rights and dignity, not truckling to court favor, or tamely submitting to royal impertinences—not like the noble lord at this place, or the more subservient viscount at that—but, in plain words, an admirable public servant,

whose reward, whatever courts and cabinets may do, will always be willingly accorded by a grateful nation.

“ I am afraid this sketch of a special envoy's career will scarcely tempt you to exchange for a mission abroad ! And you are quite right, my dear friend. It is a very unrewarding profession. I often wish myself that I had taken something in the colonies, or gone into the church, or some other career which had given me time and opportunity to look after my health ; of which, by the way, I have but an indifferent account to render you. These people here can't hit it off at all, Harcourt ; they keep muddling away about indigestion, deranged functions, and the rest of it. The mischief is in the blood ; I mean in the undue distribution of the blood. So Treysenac, the man of Bagneres, proved to me. There is a flux and reflux in us as in the tides, and when, from deficient energy, or lax muscular power, that ceases, we are all driven by artificial means to remedy the defect. Treysenac's theory is position. By a number of ingeniously contrived positions he accomplishes an artificial congestion of any part he pleases ; and in his establishment at Bagneres you may see some fifty people strung up by the arms and legs, by the waists or the ankles, in the most marvellous manner, and with truly fabulous success. I myself passed three mornings suspended by the middle, like the sheep in the decoration of the Golden Fleece, and was amazed at the strange sensations I experienced before I was cut down.

“ You know the obstinacy with which the medical people reject every discovery in the art, and only sanction its employment when the world has decreed in its favor. You will, therefore, not be surprised to hear that Larrey and Cooper, to whom I wrote about Treysenac's theory, sent me very unsatisfactory, indeed very unseemly, replies. I have resolved, however, not to let the thing drop, and am determined to originate a suspensorium in England, when I can chance upon a man of intelligence and scientific knowledge to conduct it. Like mesmerism, the system has its antipathies, and thus yesterday Crawley fainted twice after a few minutes' suspension by the arms. But he is a bigot about anything he hears for the first time, and I was not sorry at his punishment.

“ I wish you would talk over this matter with any clever medical man in your neighborhood, and let me hear the result.

“ And so you are surprised, you say, how little influence English representations exercise over the determinations of foreign cabinets. I go further and confess no astonishment at all at the no-influence ! My dear

dragoon, have you not, some hundred and fifty times in this life, endured a small martyrdom in seeing a very indifferent rider torment almost to madness the animal he bestrode, just by sheer ignorance and awkwardness—now worrying the flank with incautious heel, now irritating the soft side of the mouth with incessant jerkings—always counteracting the good impulses, ever prompting the bad ones, of his beast? And have you not, while heartily wishing yourself in the saddle, felt the utter inutility of administering any counsels to the rider? You saw, and rightly saw, that even if he attempted to follow your suggestions, he would do so awkwardly and inaptly, acting at wrong moments and without that continuity of purpose which must ever accompany an act of address; and that for his safety and even for the welfare of the animal, it were as well they should jog on together as they had done, trusting that after a time they might establish a sort of compromise endurable if not beneficial to both.

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“At all events, if it be any satisfaction to you, you may be assured that the rulers in all these cases are not much better off than those they rule over. They lead lives of incessant terror, distrust, and anxiety. Their existence is poisoned by ceaseless fears of treachery—they know not where. They change ministers as travellers change the direction of their journey, to disconcert the supposed plans of their enemies; and they vacillate between cruelty and mercy, really not knowing in which lies their safety. Don't fancy that they have any innate pleasure in harsh measures. The likelihood is, they hate them as much as you do yourself; but they know no other system; and to come back to my cavalry illustration, the only time they tried a snaffle, they were run away with.

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"Is your master out?" asked he, at length.

"Yes, sir; but I expect him immediately. Dinner was ordered for six, and he'll be back to dress half an hour before."

"Dinner for two?" half impatiently asked the other.

"Yes, sir, for two."

"And all visitors in the evening denied admittance? Did your master say so?"

"Yes, sir; out for every one."

Glencore now covered his face with his hands, and relapsed into silence. At length he lifted his eyes till they fell upon a colored drawing over the chimney. It was an officer in hussar uniform, mounted on a splendid charger, and seated with all the graceful ease of a consummate horseman. This much alone he could perceive from where he lay, and indolently raising himself on one arm he asked if it were "a portrait of his master?"

"No, sir—of my master's colonel, Lord Glencore, when he commanded the Eighth, and said to have been the handsomest man in the service."

"Show it to me!" cried he, eagerly, and almost snatched the drawing from the other's hands. He gazed at it intently and fixedly, and his sallow cheek once reddened slightly as he continued to look.

"That never was a likeness!" said he, bitterly.

"My master thinks it a wonderful resemblance, sir; not of what he is now, of course; but that was taken fifteen years ago or more."

"And is he so changed since that?" asked the sick man, plaintively.

"So I hear, sir. He had a stroke of some kind, or fit of one sort or another, brought on by fretting. They took away his title, I'm told. They made out that he had no right to it, that he wasn't the real lord; but here's the colonel, sir," and almost as he spoke Harcourt's step was on the stair. The next moment his hand was cordially clasped in that of his guest.

"I scarcely expected you before six; and how have you borne the journey?" cried he, taking a seat beside the sofa. A gentle motion of the eyebrows gave the reply.

"Well, well, you'll be all right after the soup. Marcom, serve the dinner at once. I'll not dress—and mind, no admittance to any one."

"You have heard from Upton?" asked Glencore.

"Yes."

"And satisfactorily?" asked he, more anxiously.

"Quite so; but you shall know all bye-and-bye. I have got mackerel for you. It was a favorite dish of yours long ago, and you shall taste such mutton as your Welsh mountains can't equal. I got the haunch from the Ardennes a week ago, and kept it for you."

"I wish I deserved such generous fare; but I have only an invalid's stomach," said Glencore, smiling faintly.

"You shall be reported well, and fit for duty to-day, or my name is not George Harcourt. The strongest and toughest fellow that ever lived couldn't stand up against the united effects of low diet and low spirits. To act generously and think generously, you must live generously, take plenty of exercise, breathe fresh air, and know what it is to be downright weary when you go to bed; not bored, mark you, for that's another thing. Now here comes the soup, and you shall tell me whether turtle be not the best restorative a man ever took after twelve hours of the road."

Whether tempted by the fare, or anxious to gratify the hospitable wishes of his host, Glencore ate heartily, and drank what for his abstemious habit was freely, and, so far as a more genial air and a more ready smile went, fully justified Harcourt's anticipations.

"By Jove, you're more like yourself than I have seen you this many a day," said the Colonel, as they drew their chairs towards the fire, and sat with that now banished, but ever to be regretted, little spider table, that once emblemized, after-dinner blessedness, between them. "This reminds one of long ago, Glencore, and I don't see why we cannot bring to the hour some of the cheerfulness that we once boasted."

A faint, very faint smile, with more of sorrow than joy in it, was the other's only reply.

"Look at the thing this way, Glencore," said Harcourt, eagerly. "So long as a man has, either by his fortune or by his personal qualities, the means of benefitting others, there is a downright selfishness in shutting himself up in his sorrow, and saying to the world, 'My own griefs are enough for me; I'll take no care or share in yours.' Now, there never was a fellow with less of this selfishness than you—"

"Do not speak to me of what I was my dear friend. There's not a plank of the old craft remaining. The name alone lingers, and even that will soon be extinct."

"Why, there's Charley—he's not ill, surely. You have no apprehensions about him?"

"What do you mean?" cried Glencore, hastily. "Are you the only man in all England that is ignorant of the story of his birth? Have not the newspapers carried the tidings over all Europe that Lord Glencore never was married?"

"I read the paragraph just after my arrival at Malta; and, do you know—shall I tell you what I thought of it?"

"Perhaps you had better not do so," said Glencore, sternly.

"By Jove, then, I will, just for that menace," said Harcourt. "I said, when I



saw it, 'That's vengeance on Glencore's part.'

"To whom, sir, did you make this remark?"

"To myself, of course. I never alluded to the matter to any other. Never."

"So far well," said Glencore, solemnly; "for had you done so, we had never exchanged words again!"

"My dear fellow," said Harcourt, laying his hand affectionately on the other's, "I can well imagine the price a sensitive nature like yours must pay for the friendship of one so little gifted with tact as I am. But remember always that there's this advantage in the intercourse: you can afford to hear and bear things from a man of *my* stamp that would be outrageous from perhaps the lips of a brother; as Upton, in one of his bland moments, once said to me, 'Fellows like you, Harcourt, are the bitters of the human pharmacopeia,—somewhat hard to take, but very wholesome when you're once swallowed.'"

"You are the best of the triad, and no great praise that, either," muttered Glencore to himself. After a pause he continued: "It has not been from any distrust in your friendship, Harcourt, that I have not spoken to you before on this gloomy subject. I know well that you bear me more affection than any one of all those who call themselves my friends; but when a man is about to do that which never can meet approval from those who love him, he seeks no counsel, he invites no confidence. Like the gambler, who risks all on a single throw, he makes his venture from the impulse of a secret mysterious prompting within, that whispers, with this you are rescued or ruined! Advice, counsel!" cried he, in bitter mockery, "tell me, when have such ever alleviated the tortures of a painful malady? Have you ever heard that the writhings of the sick man were calmed by the honeyed words of his friends at the bed-side? I"—here his voice became full and loud, "I was burthened with a load too great for me to bear. It had bowed me to the earth, and all but crushed me! The sense of an unaccomplished vengeance was like a debt which, unrequited ere I died, sent me to my grave dishonored. Which of you all could tell me how to endure this? What shape could your philosophy assume?"

"Then I guessed aright," broke in Harcourt. "This was done in vengeance."

"I have no reckoning to render you, sir," said Glencore, haughtily; "for any confidence of mine, you are more indebted to my passion than to my inclination. I came up here to speak and confer with you about

this boy, whose guardianship you are unable to continue longer. Let us speak of that."

"Yes," said Harcourt, in his habitual tone of easy good humor, "they are going to send me out to India again. I have had eighteen years of it already; but I have no parliamentary influence, nor could I trace a fortieth cousinship with the House of Lords: but, after all, it might be worse. Now, as to this lad, what if I were to take him out with me? This artist life that he seems to have adopted scarcely promises much."

"Let me see Upton's letter," said Glencore, gravely.

"There it is. But I must warn you that the really important part is wanting; for instead of sending us, as he promised, the communication of his Russian Princess, he has stuffed in a mass of papers intended for Downing-street, and a lot of doctors' prescriptions, for whose loss he is doubtless suffering martyrdom."

"Is this credible?" cried Glencore.

"There they are, very eloquent about sulphur, and certain refugees with long names, and with some curious hints about Spanish flies and the flesh-brush."

Glencore flung down the papers in indignation, and walked up and down the room without speaking.

"I'd wager a trifle," cried Harcourt, "that Madame—What's-her-name's letter has gone to the Foreign Office in lieu of the dispatches, and if so, they have certainly gained most by the whole transaction."

"You have scarcely considered, perhaps, what publicity may thus be given to my private affairs," said Glencore. "Who knows what this woman may have said—what allusions her letter may contain?"

"Very true. I never did think of that," muttered Harcourt.

"Who knows what circumstances of my private history are now banded about from desk to desk by flippant fools, to be disseminated afterwards over Europe by every courier?" cried he, with increasing passion.

Before Harcourt could reply, the servant entered, and whispered a few words in his ear. "But you already denied me?" said Harcourt. "You told him that I was from home?"

"Yes, sir; but he said that his business was so important that he'd wait for your return, if I could not say where he might find you. This is his card."

Harcourt took it, and read "Major Scratchley, from Naples."—"What think you, Glencore? Ought we to admit this gentleman? It may be that his visit relates to what we have been speaking about?"

"Scratchley—Scratchley. I know the

name," muttered Glencore. "To be sure! There was a fellow that hung about Florence and Rome long ago, and called himself Scratchley, an ill-tongued old scandal-monger, people encouraged in a land where newspapers are not permitted."

"He affects to have something very pressing to communicate. Perhaps it were better to have him up."

"Don't make me known to him, then, or let me have to talk to him," said Glencore, throwing himself down on a sofa; "and let his visit be as brief as you can manage."

Harcourt made a significant sign to his servant, and the moment after the Major was heard ascending the stairs.

"Very persistent of me, you'll say, Colonel Harcourt. Devilish tenacious of my intentions, to force myself thus upon you!" said the Major, as he bustled into the room, with a white leather bag in his hand; "but I promised Upton I'd not lie down on a bed till I saw you."

"All the apologies should come from my side, Major," said Harcourt, as he handed him to a chair; "but the fact was, that having an invalid friend with me, quite incapable of seeing company, and having matters of some importance to discuss with him—"

"Just so," broke in Scratchley, "and if it were not that I had given a very strong pledge to Upton, I'd have given my message to your servant, and gone off to my hotel. But he laid great stress on my seeing you, and obtaining certain papers which, if I understand aright, have reached you in mistake, being meant for the minister at Downing-street. Here's his own note, however, which will explain all."

It ran thus:

"Dear H—

"So I find that some of the dispatches have got into your inclosure instead of that 'on his Majesty's service.' I therefore send off the insupportable old bore who will deliver this, to rescue them, and convey them to their fitting destination. 'The extraordinaries' will be burthened to some fifty or sixty pounds for it; but they very rarely are expended so profitably as in getting rid of an intolerable nuisance. Give him all the things, therefore, and pack him off to Downing-street. I'm far more uneasy, however, about some prescriptions which I suspect are along with them. One, a lotion for the cervical vertebra of invaluable activity; which you may take a copy of, but strictly on honor, for your own use only. Scratchley will obtain the Princess' letter and hand it to you. It is certain not to have been opened at F. O. as they never

read anything not alluded to in the private correspondence.

"This blunder has done me a deal of harm. My nerves are not in a state to stand such shocks; and though in fact you are not the culpable party, I cannot entirely acquit you for having in part occasioned it." Harcourt laughed good humoredly at this, and continued. "If you care for it, old S. will give you all the last gossip from these parts, and be the channel of yours to me. But don't dine him. He's not worth a dinner. He'll only repay sherry and soda-water, and one of those execrable cheroots you used to be famed for. Amongst the recipes let me recommend you an admirable tonic, the principal ingredient in which is the oil of the star-fish. It will probably produce nausea, vertigo, and even fainting for a week or two; but these symptoms decline at last, and, except violent hiccup, no other inconvenience remains. Try it, at all events.

Yours ever,

"H. U."

While Harcourt perused this short epistle, Scratchley, on the invitation of his host, had helped himself freely to the Madeira, and a plate of devilled biscuits beside it, giving, from time to time, oblique glances towards the dark corner of the room, where Glencore lay apparently asleep.

"I hope Upton's letter justifies my insistence, Colonel. He certainly gave me to understand that the case was a pressing one," said Scratchley.

"Quite so, Major Scratchley, and I have only to reiterate my excuses for having denied myself to you; but you are aware of the reason," and he glanced towards where Glencore was lying.

"Very excellent fellow, Upton," said the Major, sipping his wine, "but very—what shall I call it?—eccentric—very odd—not like any one else, you know, in the way he does things. I happened to be one of his guests t'other day. He had detained us above an hour waiting dinner, when he came in all hurried and excited, and turning to me said, 'Scratchley, have you any objection to a trip to England at his Majesty's expense?' and as I replied, 'None whatever; indeed it would suit my book to perfection just now.'—'Well, then,' said he, 'get your traps together, and be here within an hour. I'll have all in readiness for you.' I did not much fancy starting off in this fashion, and without my dinner, too; but, egad, he's one of those fellows that don't stand parleying, and so I just took him at his word, and here I am! I take it the matter must be a very emergent one, eh?"



"It is clear Sir Horace Upton thought so," said Harcourt, rather amused than offended by the other's curiosity.

"There's a woman in it, some how, I'll be bound, eh?"

Harcourt laughed heartily at this sally, and pushed the decanter towards his guest.

"Not that I'd give sixpence to know every syllable of the whole transaction," said Scratchley. "A man that has passed, as I have done, the last twenty-five years of his life between Rome, Florence, and Naples, has devilish little to learn of what the world calls scandal."

"I suppose you must indeed possess a wide experience," said Harcourt.

"Not a man in Europe, sir, could tell you as many dark passages of good society! I kept a kind of book once—a record of fashionable delinquencies; but I had to give it up. It took me half my day to chronicle even the passing events; and then my memory grew so retentive by practice I didn't want the reference, but could give you date and name and place for every incident that has scandalized the world for the last quarter of the century."

"And do you still possess this valuable gift, Major?"

"Pretty well; not perhaps to the same extent I once did. You see, Colonel Harcourt,"—here his voice became low and confidential, "some twenty, or indeed fifteen years back, it was only persons of actual condition that permitted themselves the liberty to do these things; but, hang it, sir, now you have your middle class folk as prodigate as their betters. Jones, and Smith, and Thompson runs away with his neighbor's wife, cheats at cards, and forges his friend's name, just as if he had the best blood in his veins, and fourteen quarterings on his escutcheon. What memory, then, I ask you, could retain all the shortcomings of these people?"

"But I'd really not trouble my head with such ignoble delinquents," said Harcourt.

"Nor do I, sir, save when, as will sometimes happen, they have a footing, with one leg at least, in good society. For, in the present state of the world, a woman with a pretty face and a man with a knowledge of horseflesh may move in any circle they please."

"You're a severe censor of the age we live in, I see," said Harcourt, smiling. "At the same time, the offences could scarcely give you much uneasiness, or you'd not take up your residence where they most abound."

"If you want to destroy tigers, you must frequent the jungle," said Scratchley, with one of his heartiest laughs.

"Say rather, if you have the vulture's appetite, you must go where there is carrion!" cried Glencore, with a voice to which passion lent a savage vehemence.

"Eh! ha! very good! devilish smart of your sick friend. Pray present me to him," said Scratchley, rising.

"No, no, never mind him," whispered Harcourt, pressing him down into his seat. "At some other time, perhaps. He is nervous and irritable. Conversation fatigues him, too."

"Egad! that was neatly said, though; I hope I shall not forget it. One envies these sick fellows, sometimes, the venom they get from bad health. But I am forgetting myself in the pleasure of your society," added he, rising from the table, as he finished off the last glass in the decanter. "I shall call at Downing-street to-morrow for that letter of Upton's, and with your permission will deposit it in your hands afterwards."

Harcourt accompanied him to the door with thanks. Profuse indeed was he in his recognitions, desiring to get him clear off the ground before any further allusions on his part, or rejoinders from Glencore, might involve them all in new complications.

"I know that fellow well," cried Glencore, almost ere the door closed on him. "He is just what I remember him some fifteen years ago. Dressed up in the cast-off vices of his betters, he has passed for a man of fashion amongst his own set, while he is regarded as a wit by those who mistake malevolence for humor. I ask no other test of a society than that such a man is endured in it."

"I sometimes suspect," said Harcourt, "that the world never believes these fellows to be as ill-natured as their tongues bespeak them."

"You are wrong, George; the world knows them well. The estimation they are held in is, for the reflective flattery by which each listener to their sarcasms soothes his own conscience as he says, 'I could be just as bitter, if I consented to be as bad.'"

"I cannot at all account for Upton's endurance of such a man," said Harcourt.

"As there are men who fancy that they strengthen their animal system by braving every extreme of climate, so Upton imagines that he invigorates his *morale* by associating with all kinds and descriptions of people; and there is no doubt that in doing so he extends the sphere of his knowledge of mankind. After all," muttered he, with a sigh, "it's only learning the geography of a land too unhealthy to live in."

Glencore arose as he said this, and with a nod of leave-taking retired to his room.

CHAPTER XXXVI.  
A FEVERED MIND.

HARCOURT passed the morning of the following day in watching the street for Scratchley's arrival. Glencore's impatience had grown into absolute fever to obtain the missing letter, and he kept asking every moment at what hour he had promised to be there; and wondering at his delay.

Noon passed over—one o'clock—it was now nearly half past, as a carriage drove hastily to the door.

"At last," cried Glencore with a deep sigh.

"Sir Gilbert Bruce, sir, requests to know if you can receive him," said the servant to Harcourt.

"Another disappointment!" muttered Glencore, as he left the room, when Harcourt motioned to the servant to introduce the visitor.

"My dear Colonel Harcourt," cried the other, entering, "excuse a very abrupt call—but I have a most pressing need of your assistance. I hear you can inform me of Lord Glencore's address."

"He is residing in North Wales at present. I can give you his post town."

"Yes, but can I be certain that he will admit me if I should go down there? He is living, I hear, in strict retirement, and I am anxious for a personal interview."

"I cannot insure you that," said Harcourt. "He does live, as you have heard, entirely estranged from all society. But if you write to him——"

"Ah! there's the difficulty. A letter and its reply take some days."

"And is the matter, then, so very imminent?"

"It is so; at least it is thought to be so by an authority that neither you nor I will be likely to dispute. You know his lordship intimately, I fancy?"

"Perhaps I may call myself as much his friend as any man living."

"Well, then, I may confide to you my business with him. It happened that a few days back, Lord Adderley was on a visit with the king at Brighton, when a foreign messenger arrived with dispatches. They were of course forwarded to him there; and as the King has a passion for that species of literature, he opened them all himself. Now, I suspect that his Majesty cares more for the amusing incidents which occasionally diversify the life of foreign courts, than for the great events of politics. At all events, he devours them with avidity, and seems conversant with the characters and private affairs of some hundreds of people he has never seen, nor in all likelihood will ever see! In turning over the loose pages of one of the

dispatches from Naples, I think, he came upon what appeared to be a fragment of a letter. Of what it was, or what it contained, I have not the slightest knowledge. Adderley himself has not seen it, nor any one but the King. All I know is that it concerns, in some way, Lord Glencore; for immediately on reading it he gave me instructions to find him out and send him down to Brighton."

"I am afraid, were you to see Glencore, your mission would prove a failure. He has given up the world together, and even a royal command would scarcely withdraw him from his retirement."

"At all events, I must make the trial. You can let me have his address, and perhaps you would do more, and give me some sort of introduction to him—something that might smooth down the difficulty of a first visit."

Harcourt was silent, and stood for some seconds in deep thought, which the other, mistaking for a sign of unwillingness to comply with his request, quickly added, "If my demand occasion you any inconvenience, or if there be the slightest difficulty——"

"Nay, nay, I was not thinking of that," said Harcourt. "Pray excuse me for a moment. I will fetch you the address you spoke of," and, without waiting for more, he left the room. The next minute he was in Glencore's room, hurriedly narrating to him all that had passed, and asking him what course he should pursue. Glencore heard the story with a greater calm than Harcourt dared to hope for; and seemed pleased at the reiterated assurance that the King alone had seen the letter referred to; and when Harcourt abruptly asked what was to be done, he slowly replied, "I must obey his Majesty's commands. I must go to Brighton."

"But are you equal to all this? Have you strength for it?"

"I think so; at all events, I am determined to make the effort. I was a favorite with his Majesty long ago. He will say nothing to hurt me needlessly; nor is it in his nature to do so. Tell Bruce that you will arrange everything, and that I shall present myself to-morrow at the palace."

"Remember, Glencore, that if you say so——"

"I must be sure and keep my word. Well, so I mean, George. I was a courtier once upon a time, and have not outlived my deference to a sovereign. I'll be there—you may answer for me."

From the moment that Glencore had come to this resolve, a complete change seemed to pass over the nature of the man. It was as though a new spring had been given to his



existence. The reformation that all the blandishments of friendship, all the soft influences of kindness could never accomplish, was more than half effected by the mere thought of an interview with a King, and the possible chance of a little royal sympathy!

If Harcourt was astonished, he was not the less pleased at all this. He encouraged Glencore's sense of gratification by every means in his power, and gladly lent himself to all the petty anxieties about dress and appearance in which he seemed now immersed. Nothing could exceed, indeed, the care he bestowed upon these small details; ever insisting as he did that, his Majesty being the best dressed gentleman in Europe, these matters assumed a greater importance in his eyes.

"I must try to recover somewhat of my former self," said he. "There was a time when I came and went freely to Carlton House, when I was somewhat more than a mere frequenter of the Prince's society. They tell me that of late he is glad to see any of those who partook of his intimacy in those times; who can remember the genial spirits who made his table the most brilliant circle of the world; who can talk to him of Hanger, and Kelly, and Sheridan, and the rest of them. I spent my days and nights with them."

Warning with the recollection of a period which, dissolute and dissipated as it was, yet redeemed by its brilliancy many of its least valuable features, Glencore poured forth story after story of a time when statesmen had the sportiveness of schoolboys, and the greatest intellects loved to indulge in the wildest excesses of folly. A good jest upon Eldon, a smart epigram on Sidmouth, a quiz against Vansittart, was a fortune at court; and there grew up thus around the Prince a class who cultivated ridicule so assiduously, that nothing was too high or too venerable to escape their sarcasms.

Though Glencore was only emerging out of boyhood—a young subaltern in the Prince's own regiment when he first entered this society, the impression it had made upon his mind was not the less permanent. Independently of the charm of being thus admitted to the most choice circle of the land, there was the fascination of intimacy with names that even amongst contemporaries were illustrious.

"I feel in such spirits to-day, George," cried Glencore at length, "that I vote we go and pass the day at Richmond. We shall escape the possibility of being bored by your acquaintance. We shall have a glorious stroll through the fields, and a pleasant dinner afterwards at the Star and Garter."

Only too well pleased at this sudden change in his friend's humor, Harcourt assented.

The day was a bright and clear one, with a sharp frosty air and that elasticity of atmosphere that invigorates and stimulates. They both soon felt its influence, and as the hours wore over, pleasant memories of the past were related, and old friends remembered and talked over in a spirit that brought back to each much of the youthful sentiments they recorded.

"If one could only go over it all again, George," said Glencore, as they sat after dinner, "up to three and twenty, or even a year or two later, I'd not ask to change a day—scarcely an hour. Whatever was deficient in fact was supplied by hope. It was a joyous, brilliant time, when we all made partnership of our good spirits and traded freely on the capital. Even Upton was frank and free-hearted then. There were some six or eight of us, with just fortune enough never to care about money, and none of us so rich as to be immersed in dreams of gold, as ever happens with your millionaire. Why could we not have continued so to the end!"

Harcourt adroitly turned him from the theme which he saw impending—his departure for the continent, his residence there, and his marriage, and once more occupied him in stories of his youthful life in London, when Glencore suddenly came to a stop and said: "I might have married the greatest beauty of the time—of a family, too, second to none in all England. You know to whom I allude. Well, she would have accepted me; her father was not averse to the match: a stupid altercation with her brother, Lord Hervey, at Brookes' one night—an absurd dispute about some etiquette of the play-table—estranged me from their house. I was offended at what I deemed their want of courtesy in not seeking me—for I was in the right; every one said so. I determined not to call first. They gave a great entertainment, and omitted me, and rather than stay in town to publish this affront, I started for the continent, and out or that pretty incident, a discussion of the veriest trifle imaginable, there came the whole course of my destiny."

"To be sure," said Harcourt, with assumed calm, "every man's fortune in life is at the sport of some petty incident or other, which at the time he undervalues."

"And then we scoff at those men who scrutinize each move, and hesitate over every step in life, as triflers, and little minded; while, if your remark be just, it is exactly such are the wise and the prudent," cried Glencore with warmth. "Had I, for in-

stance, seen this occurrence, trivial as it was, in its true light, what and where might I not have been to-day !”

“My dear Glencore, the luckiest fellow that ever lived, were he only to cast a look back on opportunities neglected, and conjunctures unexploited by, would be sure to be miserable. I am far from saying that some have not more than their share of the world's sorrows ; but, take my word for it, every one has his load, be it greater or less, and, what is worse, we all of us carry our burthens with as much inconvenience to ourselves as we can.”

“I know what you would say, Harcourt. It is the old story about giving way to passion, and suffering temper to get the better of one ; but let me tell you that there are trials where passion is an instinct, and reason works too slowly. I have experienced such as this.”

“Give yourself but fair play, Glencore, and you will surmount all your troubles. Come back into the world again—I don't mean this world of balls and dinner-parties, of morning calls and afternoons in the park ; but a really active, stirring life. Come with me to India, and let us have a raid amongst the jaguars ; mix with the pleasant, light-hearted fellows you'll meet at every mess, who ask for nothing better than their own good spirits and good health, to content them with the world ; just look out upon life, and see what numbers are struggling and swimming for existence, while you, at least, have competence and wealth for all you wish ; and bear in mind that round the table where wit is flashing, and the merriest laughter rings, there is not a man—no, not one—who hasn't a something heavy in his heart, but yet who'd feel himself a coward if his face confessed it.”

“And why am I to put this mask upon me ? for what and for whom have I to wear this disguise ?” cried Glencore, angrily.

“For yourself ! It is in bearing up manfully before the world, you'll gain the courage to sustain your own heart. Ay, Glencore, you'll do it to-morrow. In the presence of royalty you'll comport yourself with dignity and reserve, and you'll come out from the interview higher and stronger in self-esteem.”

“You talk as if I were some country squire who would stand abashed and awestruck before his king ; but remember, my worthy Colonel, I have lived a good deal inside the tabernacle, and its mysteries are no secrets to me.”

“Reason the more for what I say !” broke in Harcourt ; “your deference will not obliterate your judgment ; your just respect will not alloy your reason.”

“I'll talk to the king, sir, as I talk to you,” said Glencore, passionately : “nor is the visit of my seeking. I have long since done with courts and those who frequent them. What can royalty do for me ? Upton and yourself may play the courtier, and fawn at levees ; you have your petitions to present, your favors to beg for ; you want to get this, or be excused from that ; but I am no supplicant. I ask for no place—no ribbon. If the king speak to me about my private affairs, he shall be answered as I would answer any one who obtrudes his rank into the place that should only be occupied by friendship.”

“It may be that he has some good counsel to offer.”

“Counsel to offer me,” burst in Glencore, with increased warmth. “I would no more permit any man to give me advice unasked, than I would suffer him to go to my trades-people and pay my debts for me. A man's private sorrows are as his debts—obligations between himself and his own heart. Don't tell me, sir, that even a king's prerogative absolves him from the duties of a gentleman.”

While he uttered these words, he continued to fill and empty his wineglass several times, as if passion had stimulated his thirst ; and now his flashing eyes and his heightened color betrayed the effect of wine.

“Let us stroll out into the cool air,” said Harcourt. “See what a gorgeous night of stars it is.”

“That you may resume your discourse on patience and resignation !” said Glencore, scoffingly. “No, sir. If I must listen to you, let me have at least the aid of the decanter. Your bitter maxims are a bad substitute for olives, but I must have wine to swallow them.”

“I never meant them to be so distasteful to you,” said Harcourt, good humoredly.

“Say rather, you troubled your head little whether they were or not,” replied Glencore, whose voice was now thick from passion and drink together. “You, and Upton, and two or three others, presume to lecture me—who, because gifted, if you can call it gifted—I'd say, cursed—aye, sir, cursed with coarser natures—temperaments where higher sentiments have no place—fellows that can make what they feel subordinate to what they want—you appreciate that, I hope—that stings you, does it ? Well, sir, you'll find me as ready to act as to speak. There's not a word I utter here I mean to retract to-morrow !”

“My dear Glencore, we have both taken too much wine.”

“Speak for yourself, sir. If you desire to make the claret the excuse for your lan-



guage, I can only say it's like everything else in your conduct—always a subterfuge—always a scapegoat. O, George, George, I never suspected this in you,” and burying his head between his hands, he burst into tears.

He never spoke a word as Harcourt assisted him to the carriage, nor did he open his lips on the road homewards.

## CHAPTER XXXVII.

## THE VILLA AT SORRENTO.

IN one of the most sequestered nooks of Sorrento, almost escarped out of the rocky cliff, and half hid in the foliage of orange and oleander trees, stood the little villa of the Princess Sabloukoff. The blue sea washed the white marble terrace before the windows, and the arbutus, whose odor scented the drawing-room, dipped its red berries in the glassy water. The wildest and richest vegetation abounded on every side. Plants and shrubs of tropical climes mingled with the hardier races of northern lands; and the cedar and the plantain blended their leaves with the sycamore and the ilex; while, as if to complete the admixture, birds and beasts of remote countries were gathered together: and the bustard, the ape, and the antelope mixed with the peacock, the chamois, and the golden pheasant. The whole represented one of those capricious exhibitions by which wealth so often associates itself with the beautiful, and, despite all errors in taste, succeeds in making a spot eminently lovely. So was it. There was often light where a painter would have wished shadow. There were gorgeous flowers where a poet would have desired nothing beyond the blue heather bell. There were startling effects of view, managed where chance glimpses through the trees had been infinitely more picturesque. There was, in fact, the obtrusive sense of riches in a thousand ways and places where mere unadorned nature had been far preferable; and yet, with all these faults, sea and sky, rock and foliage, the scented air, the silence, only broken by the tuneful birds, the rich profusion of color upon a sward strewn with flowers, made of the spot a perfect paradise.

In a richly decorated room, whose three windows opened on a marble terrace, sat the Princess. It was December; but the sky was cloudless, the sea a perfect mirror, and the light air that stirred the leaves soft and balmy as the breath of May. Her dress was in keeping with the splendor around her—a rich robe of yellow silk fastened up the front with large carbuncle buttons; sleeves of deep Valenciennes lace fell far over her jewelled fingers; and a scarf of

golden embroidery, negligently thrown over an arm of her chair, gave what a painter would call the warm color to a very striking picture. Farther from the window, and carefully protected from the air by a screen, sat a gentleman whose fur-lined pelisse and velvet skull-cap showed that he placed more faith in the almanac than in the atmosphere. From his cork-soled boots to his shawl muffled about the throat, all proclaimed that distrust of the weather that characterizes the invalid. No treachery of a hot sun—no seductions of that inveterate cheat, a fine day in winter—could inveigle Sir Horace Upton into any forgetfulness of his precautions. He would have regarded such as a palpable weakness on his part, a piece of folly perfectly unbecoming in a man of his diplomatic standing and ability.

He was writing, and smoking, and talking by turns, the table before him being littered with papers, and even the carpet at his feet strewn with the loose sheets of his composition. There was not in his air any of the concentration, or even seriousness, of a man engaged in an important labor; and yet the work before him employed all his faculties, and he gave to it the deepest attention of abilities of which very few possessed the equal. To great powers of reasoning and a very strong judgment he united a most acute knowledge of men; not exactly of mankind in the mass, but of that especial order with whom he had habitually to deal. Stolid, commonplace stupidity might puzzle or embarrass him; while, for any amount of craft, for any degree of subtlety, he was an over-match. The plain matter-of-fact intelligence occasionally gained a slight advantage over him at first; the trained and polished mind of the most astute negotiator was a book he could read at sight. It was his especial tact to catch up all this knowledge at once,—very often in a first interview,—and thus, while others were interchanging the customary platitudes of every-day courtesies, he was gleaning and recording within himself the traits and characteristics of all around him.

“A clever fellow—very clever fellow, Cineselli,” said he, as he continued to write. “His proposition is—certain commercial advantages, and that we, on our side, leave him alone to deal his own way with his own rabble. I see nothing against it, so long as they continue to be rabble; but grubs grow into butterflies, and very vulgar populace have now and then emerged into what are called liberal politicians.”

“Only where you have the blessing of a free press,” said the Princess, in a tone of insolent mockery.

“Quite true, Princess; a free press is a

tonic, that with an increased dose becomes a stimulant, and occasionally over excites."

"It makes your people drunk now and then!" said she, angrily.

"They always sleep it off over night," said he softly. "They very rarely pay even the penalty of the morning headache for the excess, which is exactly why it will not answer in warmer latitudes."

"Ours is a cold one, and I'm sure it would not suit us."

"I'm not so certain of that," said he, languidly. "I think it is eminently calculated for a people who don't know how to read."

She would have smiled at the remark, if the sarcasm had not offended her.

"Your lordship will therefore see," muttered he, reading to himself as he wrote, "that in yielding this point we are, while apparently making a concession, in reality obtaining a very considerable advantage—"

"Rather an English habit, I suspect," said she smiling.

"Picked up in the course of our Baltic trade, Princess. In sending us your skins, you smuggled in some of your sentiments; and Russian tallow has enlightened the nation in more ways than one!"

"You need it all, my dear chevalier," said she with a saucy smile. "Harzewitsch told me that your diplomatic people were inferior to those of the third-rate German states; that in fact they never had any 'information.'"

"I know what he calls 'information,' Princess; and his remark is just. Our government is shockingly mean, and never would keep up a good system of spies."

"Spies; if you mean by an odious word to inculpate the honor of a high calling—"

"Pray forgive my interruption, but I am speaking in all good faith. When I said spy, it was in the bankrupt misery of a man who had nothing else to offer. I wanted to imply that pure but small stream which conveys intelligence from a fountain to a river it was not meant to feed. Wasn't that a carriage I heard in the 'cour?' O, pray don't open the window; there's an odious dibecio blowing to-day, and there's nothing so injurious to the nervous system."

"A cabinet messenger, your Excellency," said a servant, entering.

"What a bore! I hoped I was safe from a dispatch for at least a month to come. I really believe they have no veneration for old institutions in England. They don't even celebrate Christmas!"

"I'm charmed at the prospect of a bag," cried the Princess.

"May I have the messenger shown in here, Princess?"

"Certainly; by all means."

"Happy to see your Excellency; hope your ladyship is in good health," said a smart-looking young fellow, who wore a much frogged pelisse, and sported a very well-trimmed mustache.

"Ah, Stevins, how d'ye do?" said Upton. "You've had a cold journey over the Cenis."

"Came by the Splügen, your Excellency. I went round by Vienna, and Maurice Esterhazy took me as far as Milan."

The Princess stared with some astonishment. That the messenger should thus familiarly style one of that great family was indeed matter of wonderment to her; nor was it lessened as Upton whispered her, "Ask him to dine."

"And London, how is it? Very empty, Stevins?" continued he.

"A desert," was the answer.

"Where's Lord Adderley?"

"At Brighton. The King can't do without him, greatly to Adderley's disgust, for he is dying to have a week's shooting in the Highlands."

"And Cantworth, where is he?"

"He's off for Vienna, and a short trip to Hungary. I met him at dinner at the mess while waiting for the Dover packet. By the way, I saw a friend of your Excellency's—Harcourt."

"Not gone to India?"

"No. They've made him a governor or a commander-in-chief of something in the Mediterranean. I forget exactly where or what."

"You have brought me a mighty bag, Stevins," said Upton, sighing. "I had hoped for a little ease and rest now that the House is up."

"They are all blue books, I believe," replied Stevins. "There's that blacking your Excellency wrote about, and the cricket bats; the lathe must come out by the frigate, and the down mattress at the same time."

"Just do me the favor to open the bag, my dear Stevins. I am utterly without aid here," said Upton, sighing drearily; and the other proceeded to litter the table and the floor with a variety of strange and incongruous parcels.

"Report of factory commissioners," cried he, throwing down a weighty quarto. "Yarmouth bloaters—Atkinson's cerulean paste for the eyebrows—Worcester sauce—trade returns for Tahiti—a set of shoe-making tools—eight bottles of Darby's pyloric collector—buffalo flesh brushes, devilish hard they seem—Hume's speech on the reduction of foreign legations—novels from Bull's—top boots for a tiger, and a



mass of letters," said Stevins, throwing them broadcast over the sofa.

"No dispatches?" cried Upton, eagerly.

"Not one, by Jove," said Stevins.

"Open one of those Darby's. I'll take a teaspoonful at once. Will you try it; Stevins?"

"Thanks, your Excellency, I never take physic."

"Well, you dine here then," said he, with a sly look at the Princess.

"Not to-day, your Excellency. I dine with Grammont at eight."

"Then I'll not detain you. Come back here to-morrow about eleven or a little later. Come to breakfast, if you like."

"At what hour?"

"I don't know—at any hour," sighed Upton, as he opened one of his letters and began to read, and Stevins bowed and withdrew, totally unnoticed and unrecognized as he slipped from the room.

One after another Upton threw down, after reading half a dozen lines, muttering some indistinct syllables over the dreary stupidity of letter writers in general. Occasionally he came upon some pressing appeal for money—some urgent request for even a small remittance by the next post, and these he only smiled at, while he refolded them with a studious care and neatness. "Why will you not help me with this chaos, dear Princess?" said he, at last.

"I am only waiting to be asked," said she; but I feared that there might be secrets—"

"From you?" said he, with a voice of deep tenderness, while his eyes sparkled with an expression far more like rillery than affection. The Princess, however, had either not seen or not heeded it, for she was already deep in the correspondence.

"This is strictly private. Am I to read it?" said she.

"Of course," said he, bowing courteously. And she read:

"Dear Upton,—

"Let us have a respite from tariffs and trade talk for a month or two, and tell me rather what the world is doing around you. We have never got the right end of that story about the Princess Celestine as yet. Who was he? Not Labinsky, I'll be sworn. The K—— insists it was Roseville, and I hope you may be able to assure me that he is mistaken. He is worse tempered than ever. That Glencore business has exasperated him greatly. Couldn't your Princess—the world calls her yours—" ["How good of the world, and how delicate of your friend!" said she, smiling superciliously. "Let us see who the writer is. O! a great

man—the Lord Adderley," and went on with her reading.] "Couldn't your Princess find out something of real consequence to us about the Q——?"

"What Queen does he mean?" cried she, stopping.

"The Queen of Sheba, perhaps," said Upton, biting his lips with anger, while he made an attempt to take the letter from her.

"Pardon, this is interesting," said she, and went on:—"We shall want it soon; that is, if the manufacturing districts will not kindly afford us a diversion by some open-air demonstrations and a collision with the troops. We have offered them a most taking bait, by announcing, wrongfully, the departure of six regiments for India; thus leaving the large towns in the north apparently ungarrisoned. They are such poltroons that the chances are they'll not bite! You were right about Emerson. We have made his brother a bishop, and he voted with us on the arms bill. Cole is a sterling patriot and an old whig. He says nothing shall seduce him from his party, save a Lordship of the Admiralty. Corruption everywhere, my dear Upton, except on the Treasury benches!

"Holecroft insists on being sent to Petersburg, and having ascertained that the Emperor will not accept him, I have induced the K—— to nominate him to the post. Non culpa nostra, &c. He can scarcely vote against us after such an evidence of our good will. Find out what will give most umbrage to your Court, and I'll tell you why in my next.

"Don't bother yourself about the Greeks.

The time is not come yet, nor will it till it suit our policy to loosen the ties with Russia. As to France, there is not, nor will there be in our time at least, any government there. We must deal with them as with a public meeting, which may reverse to-morrow the resolutions they have adopted to-day. The French will never be formidable till they are unanimous. They'll never be unanimous till we declare war with them! Remember, I don't want anything serious with Cineselli. Irritate and worry as much as you can. Send even for a ship or two from Malta, but go no further. I want this for our radicals at home. Our own friends are in the secret. Write me a short dispatch about our good relations with the Two Sicilies; and send me some news in a private letter. Let me have some ortolans in the bag, and believe me yours, "ADDERLEY."

"There," said she, turning over a number of letters with a mere glance at their contents, "these are all trash—shooting and fox-hunting news, which one reads in the

newspapers better, or at least more briefly narrated, with all that death and marriage intelligence which you English are so fond of parading before the world. But what is this literary gem here? Where did the paper come from? And that wonderful seal, and still more wonderful address? 'To his Worshipful Excellency the Truly Worthy and Right Honorable Sir Horace Upton, Plenipotentiary, Negotiator, and Extraordinary Diplomatist, living at Naples.'

"What can it mean?" said he, languidly.

"You shall hear," said she, breaking the massive seal of green wax, which, to the size of a crown piece, ornamented one side of the epistle. "It is dated Schwatz, Tyrol, and begins, 'Venerated and Reverend Excellency, when these unsymmetrically designed, and not more ingeniously conceived syllables—Let us see his name,' said she, stopping suddenly, and, turning to the last page, read, "W. T. *vulgo*, Billy Traynor, a name cognate to your Worshipful Eminence in times past."

"To be sure, I remember him perfectly—a strange creature, that came out here with that boy you heard me speak of. Pray, read on."

"I stopped at 'syllables.' Yes—when these curiously conceived syllables, then, 'come under the visionary apertures of your acute understanding, they will disclose to your much reflecting and nice discriminating mind, as cruel and murderous a deed as ever a miscreant imagination suggested to a diabolically constructed and nefariously fashioned organization, showing that nature in her bland adaptiveness never imposes a mistaken fruit on a genuine arborescence."

"Do you understand him?" asked she.

"Partly, perhaps," continued he. "Let us have the subject.—'Not to weary your exalted and never enough to be esteemed intelligence, I will proceed without further ambiguities or circumgyratory evolutions, to the main body of my allegation. It happened in this way. Charley—your venerated worship knows who I mean—Charley, ever deep in marmorial pursuits, and far progressed in sculptorial excellence, with a genius that Phidias, if he did not envy, would esteem—'"

"Really I cannot go on with these interminable parentheses," said she. "You must decypher them yourself."

Upton took the letter, and read it, at first hastily, and then recommencing, with more of care and attention, occasionally stopping to reflect and consider the details. "This is likely to be a troublesome business," said he. "This boy has got himself in a considerable scrape. Love and a duel are bad enough; but an Austrian state prison, and a

sentence of twenty years in irons, are even worse. So far as I can make out from my not over lucid correspondent, he had conceived a violent affection for a young lady at Massa, to whose favor a young Austrian of high rank at the same time pretended."

"Wahnsdorf, I'm certain," broke in the Princess—"and the girl, that Mademoiselle—"

"Harley," interposed Sir Horace.

"Just so—Harley—pray go on," said she, eagerly.

"A very serious altercation and a duel were the consequences of this rivalry, and Wahnsdorf has been dangerously wounded; his life is still in peril. The Harleys have been sent out of the country, and my unlucky protégé, handed over to the Austrians, has been tried, condemned, and sentenced to twenty years in Kuffstein, a Tyrol fortress where great severity is practised; from the neighborhood of which this letter is written, entreating my speedy interference and protection."

"What can you do? It is not even within your jurisdiction," said she carelessly.

"True, nor was the capture by the Austrians within theirs, Princess. It is a case where assuredly everybody was in the wrong, and therefore admirably adapted for nice negotiation."

"Who and what is the youth?"

"I have called him a protégé."

"Has he no more tender claim to the affectionate solicitude of Sir Horace Upton?" said she, with an easy air of sarcasm.

"None, on my honor," said he eagerly.

"None at least of the kind you infer. His is a very sad story, which I'll tell you about at another time. For the present I may say that he is English, and as such must be protected by the English authorities. The government of Massa have clearly committed a great fault in handing him over to the Austrians. Stubber must be brought to book for this, in the first instance. By this we shall obtain a perfect insight into the whole affair."

"The Imperial family will never forgive an insult offered to one of their own blood," said the Princess, haughtily.

"We shall not ask them to forgive anything, my dear Princess. We shall only prevent their natural feelings betraying them into an act of injustice. The boy's offence, whatever it was, occurred outside the frontier, as I apprehend."

"How delighted you English are when you can convert an individual case into an international question. You would at any moment sacrifice an ancient alliance to the trumpery claim of an aggrieved tourist!"



said she, rising angrily, and swept out of the room ere Sir Horace could arise to open the door for her.

Upton walked slowly to the chimney and rang the bell. "I shall want the caleche and post-horses at eight o'clock, Antoine."

Put up some things for me, and get all my furs ready." And with this he measured forty drops from a small phial he carried in his waistcoat pocket, and sat down to pare his nails with a very diminutive penknife.

## CHAPTER XXXVIII.

## A DIPLOMATIST'S DINNER.

WERE we writing a drama, instead of a true history, we might like to linger for a few moments on the leave-taking between the Princess and Sir Horace Upton. They were, indeed, both consummate "artists," and they played their parts to perfection—not as we see high comedy performed on the stage, by those who grotesque its refinements and exaggerate its dignity; "striving to storm" the calm and placid lake, all whose convulsive throes are many a fathom deep, and whose wildest workings never brought a ripple on the surface. No, theirs was the true version of well-bred "performance." A little well-affected grief at separation, brief as it was meant to be—a little half-expressed surprise on the lady's part, at the suddenness of the departure—a little, just as vaguely conveyed, complaint on the other side, over the severe requirements of duty, and a very little tenderness—for there was no one to witness it—at the thought of parting; and with a kiss upon her hand, whose respectful courtesy no knight errant of old could have surpassed, Sir Horace backed from "the presence," sighed, and slipped away.

Had our reader been a spectator, instead of a peruser, of the events we have lately detailed, he might have fancied from certain small asperities of manner, certain quicknesses of reproof and readiness at rejoinder, that here were two people only waiting for a reasonable and decent pretext to go on their separate roads in life. Yet nothing of this kind was the case; the bond between them was not affection—it was simply convenience. Their partnership gave them a strength and a social solvency which would have been sorely damaged had either retired from "the firm;" and they knew it.

What would the Princess's dinners have been, without the polished ease of him who felt himself half the host? What would all Sir Horace Upton's subtlety avail him, if it were not that he had sources of information which always laid open the game of his adversaries? Singly, each would have had a tough struggle with the world—together, they were more than a match for it.

The highest order of diplomatist, in the estimation of Upton, was the man who at once knew what was *possible* to be done. It was his own peculiar quality to possess this gift; but, great as his natural acuteness was, it would not have availed him, without those secret springs of intelligence we have alluded to. There is no saying to what limit he might not have carried this faculty, had it not been that one deteriorating and

detracting feature marred and disfigured the fairest form of his mind.

He could not, do all that he would, disabuse himself of the very meanest estimate of men and their motives. He did not slide into this philosophy, as certain indolent people do, just to save them the trouble of discriminating—he did not acquire it by the hard teachings of adversity. No, it came upon him slowly and gradually, the fruit, as he believed, of calm judgment and much reflection upon life. As little did he accept it willingly; he even labored against the conviction, but strive as he might, there it was, and there it would remain.

His fixed impression was, that in every circumstance and event in life there was always a "dessous des cartes"—a deeper game concealed beneath the surface—and that it was a mere question of skill and address how much of this penetrated through men's actions. If this theory unravelled many a tangled web of knavery to him, it also served to embarrass and confuse him in situations where inferior minds had never recognized a difficulty. How much ingenuity did he expend to detect what had no existence! How wearily did he try for soundings where there was no bottom!

Through the means of the Princess he had learned what some very wise heads do not yet like to acknowledge, that the feeling of the despotic governments towards England was, very different from what it had been at the close of the great war with Napoleon. They had grown more dominant and exacting, just as we were becoming every hour more democratic. To maintain our old relations with them, therefore, on the old footing, would be only to involve ourselves in continual difficulty, with a certainty of final failure; and the only policy that remained was to encourage the growth of liberal opinions on the Continent, out of which new alliances might be formed, to recompense us for the loss of the old ones. There is a story told of a certain benevolent prince, whose resources were unhappily not commensurate with his good intentions, and whose ragged retinue wearied him with entreaties for assistance. "Be of good cheer," said he, one day, "I have ordered a field of flax to be sown, and you shall all of you have new shirts." Such were pretty much the position and policy of England. Out of our crop of Conservatism we speculated on a rich harvest, to be afterwards manufactured for our use and benefit. We leave it to deeper heads to say if the result has been all that we calculated on, and, asking pardon for such digression, we join Sir Horace once more.

When Sir Horace Upton ordered post-



horses to his carriage, he no more knew where he was going, nor where he would halt, than he could have anticipated what course any conversation might take when once started. He had, to be sure, a certain ideal goal to be reached; but he was one of those men who like to think that the casual interruptions one meets with in life are less obstruction than opportunity; so that, instead of deeming these subjects for regret or impatience, he often accepted them as indications that there was some profit to be derived from them—a kind of fatalism more common than is generally believed. When he set out for Sorrento it was with the intention of going direct to Massa; not that this State lay within the limits his functions ascribed to him—that being probably the very fact which imparted a zest to the journey. Any other man would have addressed himself to his colleague in Tuscany, or wherever it might be; while he, being Sir Horace Upton, took the whole business upon himself in his own way. Young Massy's case opened to his eyes a great question, viz., what was the position the Austrians assumed to take in Italy? For any care about the youth, or any sympathy with his sufferings, he distressed himself little; not that he was in any respect heartless or unfeeling, it was simply that greater interests were before him. Here was one of those "grand issues" that he felt worthy of his abilities—it was a cause where he was proud to hold a brief.

Resolving all his plans of action methodically yet rapidly; arranging every detail in his own mind, even to the use of certain expression she was to employ; he arrived at the palace of the embassy, where he desired to halt to take up his letters and make a few preparations before his departure. His Maestro di Casa, Signor Franchetti, was in waiting for his arrival, and respectfully assured him "that all was in readiness, and that his Excellency would be perfectly satisfied. We had, it is true," continued he, "a difficulty about the fish, but I sent off an express to Baia and we have secured a sturgeon."

"What are you raving about, Caro Pipò?" said the minister; "what is all this long story of Baia and the fish?"

"Has your Excellency forgotten that we have a grand dinner to-day, at eight o'clock; that the Prince Maximilian of Bavaria and all the foreign ambassadors are invited?"

"Is this Saturday, Pipò?" said Sir Horace, blandly.

"Yes, your Excellency."

"Send Mr. Brockett to me," said Sir Horace, as he slowly mounted the stairs to his own apartment.

Sir Horace was stretched on a sofa, in all the easy luxury of magnificent dressing-gown and slippers, when Mr. Brockett entered; and without any preliminary of greeting he said, with a quiet laugh, "You have let me forget all about the dinner to-day, Brockett!"

"I thought you knew it; you took great trouble about the persons to be asked, and you canvassed whether the Duc de Borodino, being only a *Chargé d'affaires*—"

"There, there; don't you see the—the inappropriateness of what you are doing—even in England a man is not asked to criminate himself. How many are coming?"

"Nineteen; the 'Nonce' is ill, and has sent an apology."

"Then the party can be eighteen, Brockett; you must tell them that I'm ill, too ill to come to dinner. I know the Prince Max very well; he'll not take it badly, and as to Cinnasetti, we shall see what humor he is in!"

"But they'll know that you arrived here this afternoon; they'll naturally suppose——"

"They'll naturally suppose—if people ever do any thing so intensely stupid as naturally to suppose any thing—that I am the best judge of my own health; and so, Mr. Brockett, you may as well con over the terms by which you may best acquaint the company with the reasons for my absence; and if the Prince proposes a visit to me in the evening, let him come; he'll find me with a blister on the temple. Would you do me the kindness to let Antinori fetch his cupping glasses, and tell Franchetti also that I'll take my chicken grilled, not roasted. I'll look over the treaty in the evening. One mushroom, only one, he may give me, and the Carlsbad water, at 28 degrees. I'm very troublesome, Brockett, but I'm sure you'll excuse it; thanks, thanks"—and he pressed the Secretary's hand, and gave him a smile, whose blandishment had often done good service, and would do so again!

To almost any other man in the world this interruption to his journey—this sudden tidings of a formally arranged dinner, which he could not or would not attend—would have proved a source of chagrin and dissatisfaction. Not so with Upton; he liked a "contrariety." Whatever stirred the still waters of life, even though it should be a head wind, was far more grateful than a calm! He laughed to himself at the various comments his company were sure to pass over his conduct; he pictured to his mind the anger of some and the astonishment of others, and revelled in the thought of the courtier-like indignation such treatment of a Royal Highness was certain to elicit.

But who can answer for his health? said he, with an easy laugh to himself. Who can promise what he may be ten days hence? The appearance of his dinner—if one may dignify by such a name the half of a chicken, flanked by a roasted apple and a biscuit—cut short his lucubrations; and Sir Horace ate and sipped his Carlsbad, and dropped his tinctures into this, and his powders into that, and sighed to himself over the narrow resources of a *Pharmacopœia*, which had nothing more disgusting than aloes, or more offensive than *assafoetida*!

"Are they arrived, Pipó?" said he, as his servant removed the dessert of two figs and a lime.

"Yes, your Excellency, they are at table."

"How many are there?"

"Seventeen, Sir, and Mr. Brockett."

"Did the Prince seem to—to feel my absence, Pipó?"

"I thought he appeared much moved for your Excellency when Mr. Brockett spoke to him, and he whispered something to the aide-de-camp beside him."

"And the others; how did they take it?"

"Count Tarrocco said he'd retire, Sir; that he could not dine where the host was too ill to receive him; but the Duc de Campo Stritto said it was impossible they could leave the room while an 'Altesse' continued to remain in it, and they all agreed with him."

"Ha, ha, ha!" laughed Upton in a low tone. "I hope the dinner is a good one?"

"It is exquisite, sir; the Prince ate some of the caviare soup, and was asking a second time for the 'pain des ortolans' when I left the room."

"And the wine, Pipó; have you given them that rare 'La rage'?"

"Yes, your Excellency, and the 'klaus thatter cabinet'; his Royal Highness asked for it."

"Go back, then, now. I want for nothing more; only drop in here by and by, and tell me how all goes on. Just light that pastille before you go; there—that will do."

And once more his Excellency was left to himself. In that vast palace—the once home of a Royal Prince—no sounds of the distant revelry could reach the remote quarter where he sat, and all was silent and still around him, and Upton was free to ruminate and reflect at ease. There was a sense of insolent triumph in thinking that beneath his roof, at that very moment, were assembled the great representatives of almost every important State of Europe, to whom he had not deigned to accord the honor of

his presence; but though this thought did flit across his mind, far more was he intent on reflecting what might be the consequences—good or evil—of the incident. "And then," said he, aloud, "how will Printing House Square treat us? What a fulminating leader shall we not have, denouncing either our insolence or our incompetence, ending with the words, 'If, then, Sir Horace Upton be not incapacitated from illness for the discharge of his high functions, it is full time for his government to withdraw him from a sphere where his caprice and impertinence have rendered him something worse than useless;' and then will come a flood of petty corroborations—the tourist tribe who heard of us at Berlin, or called upon us at the Hague, and whose unreturned cards and uninvited wives are counts in the long indictment against us. What a sure road to private friendships is diplomacy! How certain is one of conciliating the world's good opinion by belonging to it! I wish I had followed the law, or medicine," muttered he, "they are both abstruse, both interesting; or been a gardener, or a shipwright, or a mathematical instrument maker, or"—whatever the next choice might have been we know not, for he dropped off asleep.

From that pleasant slumber, and a dream of Heaven knows what life of Arcadian simplicity, of rippling streams, and soft-eyed shepherdesses, he was destined to be somewhat suddenly if not rudely aroused, as Franchetti introduced a stranger who would accept no denial.

"Your people were not for letting me up, Upton," cried a rich mellow voice, and Harcourt stood before him, bronzed and weather-beaten, as he came off his journey.

"You! George? Is it possible?" exclaimed Sir Horace, "what best of all lucky winds has driven you here? I'm not sure I wasn't dreaming of you this very moment. I know I have had a vision of angelic innocence and simplicity, which you must have had your part in; but do tell me when did you arrive and whence——?"

"Not till I have dined, by Jove; I have tasted nothing since daybreak, and then it was only a mere apology for a breakfast."

"Franchetti, get something, will you?" said Upton languidly, "a cutlet, a fowl, any thing that can be had at once."

"Nothing of the kind, Signor Franchetti," interposed Harcourt; "if I have a wolf's appetite, I have a man's patience! Let me have a real dinner, soup, fish, an entrée—two if you like—roast beef, and I leave the wind-up to your own discretion, only premising that I like game, and have a weakness for woodcocks. By the way, does this climate suit Bourdeaux, Upton?"



"They tell me so, and mine has a good reputation."

"Then claret be it, and no other wine; don't I make myself at home, old fellow, eh?" said he, clapping Upton on the shoulder. "Have I not taken his Majesty's Embassy by storm, eh?"

"We surrender at discretion, only too glad to receive our vanquisher. Well, and how do you find me looking? Be candid, how do I seem to your eyes?"

"Pretty much as I have seen you these last fifteen years, not an hour older, at all events! That same delicacy of constitution is a confounded deal better than most men's strong health, for it never wears out; but I have always said it, Upton will see us all down!"

Sir Horace sighed as though this were too pleasant to be true. "Well," said he, at last, "but you have not told me what good chance has brought you here. Is it the first post-station on the way to India?"

"No; they've taken me off the saddle, and given me a staff appointment at Corfu. I'm going out second in command there, and whether it was to prevent my teasing them for something else, or that there was really some urgency in the matter, they ordered me off at once."

"Are they reinforcing the garrison there?" asked Upton.

"No; not so far as I have heard."

"It were better policy to do so, than to send out a commander-in-chief, and a drummer of great experience," muttered Upton to himself, but Harcourt could not catch the remark. "Have you any news stirring in England? What do the Clubs talk about?" asked Sir Horace.

"Glencore's business occupied them for the last week or so; now, I think, it is yourself furnishes the chief topic for speculation."

"What of me?" asked Upton eagerly.

"Why, the rumor goes that you are to have the Foreign Office; Adderley, they say, goes out, and Conway and yourself are the favorites, the odds being slightly on his side."

"This is all news to me, George," said Upton, with a degree of animation that had nothing fictitious about it. "I have had a note from Adderley in the last bag, and there's not a word about these changes."

"Possibly, but perhaps my news is later; what I allude to is said to have occurred the day I started."

"Ah, very true, and now I remember that the messenger came round by Vienna, sent there by Adderley, doubtless," muttered he, "to consult Conway before seeing me, and I

have little doubt with a letter for me in the event of Conway declining."

"Well, have you hit upon the solution of it?" said Harcourt, who had not followed him through his half-uttered observation.

"Perhaps so," said Upton slowly, while he leaned his head upon his hand and fell into a fit of meditation; meanwhile Harcourt's dinner made its appearance, and the colonel seated himself at the table with a traveller's appetite.

"Whenever any one has called you a selfish fellow, Upton," said he, as he helped himself twice from the same dish, "I have always denied it, and on this good ground, that had you been so, you had never kept the best cook in Europe, while unable to enjoy his talents. What a rare artist must this be—what's his name?"

"Pipo, how is he called?" said Upton, languidly.

"Monsieur Carnael, your Excellency."

"Ah, to be sure, a person of excellent family; I've been told he's from Provence," said Upton, in the same wearied drawl.

"I could have sworn to his birth-place," cried Harcourt, "no man can manage cheese and olives in cookery but a Provençal. Ah! what a glass of Bourdeaux! To your good health, Upton, and the day that you may be able to enjoy this as I do," said he, as he tossed off a bumper.

"It does me good even to witness the pleasure it yields," said Upton, blandly.

"By Jove, then, I'll be worth a whole course of tonics to you, for I most thoroughly appreciate all the good things you have given me. By the way, how are you off for dinner company here—any pleasant people?"

"I have no health for pleasant people, my dear Harcourt; like horse exercise, they only agree with you when you are strong enough not to require them."

"Then, what have you got?" asked the Colonel, somewhat abashed.

"Princes, generals, envoys, and heads of departments."

"Good heavens! legions of honor and golden fleeces."

"Just so," said Upton, smiling at the dismay in the other's countenance; "I've had such a party as you describe to-day. Are they gone yet, Franchetti?"

"They're at coffee, your Excellency, but the Prince has ordered his carriage."

"And you did not go near them?" asked Harcourt, in amazement.

"No; I was poorly, as you see me," said Upton, smiling. "Pipo tells me, however, that the dinner was a good one; and, I am sure, they pardon my absence."

"Foreign ease, I've no doubt; though I can't say I like it," muttered Harcourt. "At all events it is not for *me* to complain, since the accident has given me the pleasure of your society."

"You are about the only man I could have admitted," said Upton, with a certain graciousness of look and manner that, perhaps, detracted a little from its sincerity.

Fortunately, not so to Harcourt's eyes, for he accepted the speech in all honesty and good faith, as he said, "Thank you, heartily, my boy. The welcome is better even than the dinner, and that is saying a good deal. No more wine, thank you; I'm going to have a cigar, and with your leave I'll ask for some brandy and water."

This was addressed to Franchetti, who speedily reappeared with a liqueur stand and an ebony cigar case.

"Try these, George; they're better than your own," said Upton, drily.

"That I will," cried Harcourt, laughing; "I'm determined to draw all my resources from the country in occupation, especially as they are superior to what I can obtain from home. This same career of yours, Upton, strikes me as rather a good thing. You have all these things duty free."

"Yes, we have that privilege," said Upton, sighing.

"And the privilege of drawing some few thousand pounds per annum, paid messengers to and from England, secret service money, and the rest of it, eh!"

Upton smiled, and sighed again.

"And what do you do for all that—I mean, what are you expected to do?"

"Keep your party in when they are indisconcert the enemy when your friends are out."

"And is that always a safe game?" asked Harcourt, eagerly.

"Not when played by unskilful players, my dear George. They occasionally make sad work, and get bowled out themselves for their pains; but there's no great harm in that neither."

"How do you mean there's no harm in it?"

"Simply, that if a man can't keep his saddle he oughtn't to try to ride foremost; but these speculations will only puzzle you, my dear Harcourt. What of Glencore? You said awhile ago that the town was talking of him—how and wherefore was it?"

"Haven't you heard the story, then?"

"Not a word of it."

"Well, I'm a bad narrator; besides, I don't know where to begin, and even if I did, I have nothing to tell but the odds and ends of club gossip, for I conclude nobody knows all the facts but the King himself."

"If I were given to impatience, George, you would be a most consummate plague to me," said Upton, "but I'm not. Go on, however, in your blundering way, and leave me to glean what I can in *mine*."

Cheered and encouraged by this flattering speech, Harcourt did begin; but, more courteous to him than Sir Horace, we mean to accord him a new chapter for his revelations; premising the while to our reader that the Colonel, like the knife-grinder, had really "no story to tell."

#### CHAPTER XXXIX.

##### A VERY BROKEN NARRATIVE.

"You want to hear all about Glencore?" said Harcourt, as, seated in the easiest of attitudes in an easy chair, he puffed his cigar luxuriously; "and when I have told you all I know, the chances are you'll be little the wiser." Upton smiled a bland assent to this exordium, but in such a way as to make Harcourt feel less at ease than before.

"I mean," said the Colonel, "that I have little to offer you beyond the guesses and surmises of club talk. It will be for your own intelligence to penetrate through the obscurity afterwards. You understand me?"

"I believe I understand you," said Upton, slowly, and with the same quiet smile. Now this cold, semi-sarcastic manner of Upton was the one sole thing in the world which the honest Colonel could not stand up against; he always felt as though it were the prelude to something cutting or offensive—some sly impertinence that he could not detect till too late to resent—some insinuation that might give the point to a whole conversation, and yet be undiscovered by him till the day following. Little as Harcourt was given to wronging his neighbor, he, in this instance, was palpably unjust; Upton's manner being nothing more than the impress made upon a very subtle man by qualities very unlike any of his own, and which in their newness amused him. The very look of satire was as often an expression of sorrow and regret, that he could not be as susceptible, as easy of deception, as those about him. Let us pardon our worthy Colonel if he did not comprehend this; shrewd heads than his own have made the same mistake. Half to resent this covert slyness, half to arouse himself to any conflict before him, he said in a tone of determination, "It is only fair to tell you that you are yourself to blame for any thing that may have befallen poor Glencore."

"I to blame? Why, my dear Harcourt, you are surely dreaming."

"As wide awake as ever I was. If it had



not been for a blunder of yours—an unpardonable blunder, seeing what has become of it—sending a pack of trash to me about salt and sulphur, while you forwarded a private letter about Glencore to the Foreign Office, and this might not have happened.”

“I remember that it was a most disagreeable mistake. I have paid heavily for it, too. That lotion for the cervical vertebra has come back all torn, and we cannot make out whether it be a phosphate or a protoxide of bismuth. You don’t happen to remember?”

“I?—of course I know nothing about it. I’d as soon have taken a porcupine for a pillow as I’d have adventured on the confounded mixture. But, as I was saying, that blessed letter, written by some princess or other, as I understand, fell into the King’s hands, and the consequence was that he sent off immediately to Glencore an order to go down to him at Brighton. Naturally enough, I thought he’d not go; he had the good and sufficient pretext of his bad health to excuse him. Nobody had seen him abroad in the world for years back, and it was easy enough to say that he could not bear the journey. Nothing of the kind; he received the command as willingly as he might have done an invitation to dinner fifteen years ago, and talked of nothing else for the whole evening after but of his old days and nights in Carlton House; how gracious the Prince used to be to him formerly; how constantly he was a guest at his table; what a brilliant society it was; how full of wit and the rest of it, till, by Jove, what between drinking more wine than he was accustomed to take, and the excitement of his own talking, he became quite wild and unmanageable; he was not drunk nor any thing like it, it was rather the state of a man whose mind had got some sudden shock; for, in the midst of perfectly rational conversation, he would fall into paroxysms of violent passion, inveighing against every one, and declaring that he never had possessed one true-hearted honest friend in his life.

“It was not without great difficulty that I got him back to my lodgings, for we had gone to dine at Richmond. Then we put him to bed, and I sent for Hunter, who came on the instant. Though by this time Glencore was much more calm and composed, Hunter called the case brain-fever; had his hair cut quite close, and ice applied to the head. Without any knowledge of his history or even of his name, Hunter pronounced him to be a man whose intellect had received some terrible shock, and that the present was simply an acute attack of a long-existent malady.”

“Did he use any irritants?” asked Upton, anxiously.

“No; he advised nothing but the cold during the night.”

“Ah! what a mistake,” sighed Upton, heavily. “It was precisely the case for the cervical lotion I was speaking of. Of course he was much worse next morning?”

“That he was; not as regarded his reason, however, for he could talk collectedly enough, but he was irritable and passionate to a degree scarcely credible; would not endure the slightest opposition, and so suspicious of everything and everybody, that if he overheard a whisper it threw him into a convulsion of anger. Hunter’s opinion was evidently a gloomy one, and he said to me as we went down stairs, ‘He may come through it with life, but scarcely with a sound intellect.’ This was a heavy blow to me, for I could not entirely acquit myself of the fault of having counselled this visit to Brighton, which I now perceived had made such a deep impression upon him. I roused myself, however, to meet the emergency, and walked down to St. James’ to obtain some means of letting the King know that Glencore was too ill to keep his appointment. Fortunately, I met Knighton, who was just setting off to Brighton, and who promised to take charge of the commission. I then strolled over to Brooke’s to see the morning papers, and lounged till about four o’clock, when I turned homeward.

“Gloomy and sad I was as I reached my door, and rang the bell with a cautious hand. They did not hear the summons, and I was forced to ring again, when the door was opened by my servant, who stood pale and trembling before me. ‘He’s gone, sir—he’s gone,’ cried he, almost sobbing.

“‘Good heaven,’ cried I. ‘Dead?’

“‘No, sir, gone away—driven off, no one knows where. I had just gone out to the chemist’s, and was obliged to call round at Doctor Hunter’s about a word in the prescription they couldn’t read, and when I came back he was away.’

“I then ascertained that the carriage, which had been ordered the day before at a particular hour, and which we had forgotten to countermand, had arrived during my servant’s absence. Glencore, hearing it stop at the door, inquired whose it was, and as suddenly springing out of bed, proceeded to dress himself, which he did, in the suit he had ordered to wait on the King. So apparently reasonable was he in all he said, and such an air of purpose did he assume, that the nurse-tender averred she could not dare to interpose, believing that his attack might possibly be some sort of passing access that he was accustomed to, and knew best how to deal with.

“I did not lose a moment, but, ordering

post-horses, pursued him with all speed. On reaching Croydon, I heard he had passed about two hours before; but, though I did my best, it was in vain. I arrived at Brighton late at night, only to learn that a gentleman had got out at the Pavilion, and had not left it since.

"I do not believe that all I have ever suffered in my life equalled what I went through in the two weary hours that I passed walking up and down outside that low paling that skirts the Palace garden. The poor fellow, in all his misery, came before me in so many shapes; sometimes wandering in intellect—sometimes awake and conscious of his sufferings—now trying to comport himself as became the presence he was in—now reckless of all the world and everything. What could have happened to detain him so long—what had been the course of events since he passed that threshold, were questions that again and again crossed me.

"I tried to make my way in—I know not exactly what I meant to do afterwards—but the sentries refused me admittance. I thought of scaling the inclosure, and reaching the palace through the garden, but the police kept strict watch on every side. At last it was nigh twelve o'clock, that I heard a sentry challenge some one, and shortly after, a figure passed out and walked towards the pier. I followed, determined to make inquiry, no matter of whom. He walked so rapidly, however, that I was forced to run to overtake him. This attracted his notice; he turned hastily, and by the straggling moonlight I recognized Glencore.

"He stood for a moment still, and beckoning me towards him, he took my arm in silence, and we walked onward in the direction of the seashore. It was now a wild and gusty night. The clouds drifted fast, shutting out the moon at intervals, and the sea broke harshly along the strand.

"I cannot tell you the rush of strange and painful emotions which came upon me as I thus walked along, while not a word passed between us. As for myself, I felt that the slightest word from me might, perhaps, change the whole current of his thoughts, and thus destroy my only chance of any clue to what was passing within him. 'Are you cold?' said he, at length, feeling possibly a slight tremor in my arm. 'Not cold, exactly,' said I, 'but the night is fresh, and I half suspect too fresh for you.'—'Feel that,' said he, placing his hand in mine, and it was burning. 'The breeze that comes off the sea is grateful to me, for I am like one on fire.'—Then, I am certain, my dear Glencore," said I, 'that this is a great imprudence. Let us turn back towards the inn.'

"He made no reply, but with a rough motion of his arm moved forward as before. 'Three hours and more,' said he, with a full and stern utterance, 'they kept me waiting. There were ministers with the King. There was some foreign envoy, too, to be presented, and if I had not gone in alone and unannounced, I might still be in the ante-chamber. How he stared at me, Harcourt, and my close-cropt hair. It was *that* seemed first to strike him, as he said, 'Have you had an illness lately?' He looked poorly, too, bloated and pale, and like one who fretted, and I told him so. We are both changed, sir, said I—sadly changed since we met last. We might almost begin to hope that another change is not far off,—the last and the best one. I don't remember what he answered. It was, I think, something about who came along with me from town, and who was with me at Brighton—I forget exactly, but I know that he sent for Knighton, and made him feel my pulse. You'll find it rapid enough, I've no doubt, Sir William, said I. I rose from a sick bed to come here; his Majesty had deigned to wish to see me. Then the King stopped me, and made a sign to Knighton to withdraw.

"'Wasn't it a strange situation, Harcourt, to be seated there beside the King, alone? None other present—all to ourselves—talking as you and I might talk of what interested us most of all the world—and *he* showing me that letter, the letter that ought to have come to me. How he could do it I know not. Neither you nor I, George, could have done so; for, after all, she was, ay, and she *is*, his wife. He could not avail himself of *my* stratagem. I said so, too, and he answered, Aye, but I can divorce her if one half of that be true, and he pointed to the letter. Then Countess Glencore, said he, must know everything, and be willing to tell it, too. She has paid the heaviest penalty ever woman paid for another. Read that,—and I read it—ay, I read it four times, five times over—and then my brain began to burn, and a thousand fancies flitted across me, and though he talked on, I heard not a word.

"'But what Countess is my wife, sir, broke I in, and what a part do you assign her! She is to be a spy, a witness, perhaps, in some infamous cause. How shall I, a peer of the realm, endure to see my name thus degraded? Is it court favor can recompense me for lost or tarnished honor? But it will be her own vindication, said he. Her own vindication—these were the words, George—she should be clear of all reproach. By Heaven, he said so, that I might declare it before the world—and when it should be proved—be proved. How base a man can



be, even though he wear a crown! Just fancy his proposition; but I spurned it, and said, you must seek for some one with a longer chance of life, sir, to do this; my days are too brief for such dishonor; and he was angry with me, and said I had forgotten the presence in which I stood. It was true, I had forgotten it.

"He called me a wretched fool, too, as I tore up that letter. That was wrong in me, Harcourt, was it not? I did not see him go, but I found myself alone in the room, and I was picking up the fragments of the letter as they entered. They were less than courteous to me, though I told them who I was—an ancient barony better than half the modern marquises. I gave them date and place for a creation that smacked of other services than a Jacques. Knighton would come with me, but I shook him off. Your court physician can carry his complaisance even to poison. By George, it is their chief office, and I know well what snares are now in store for me."

"And thence he went on to say that he would hasten back to his Irish solitude, where none could trace him out. That there his life, at least, would be secure, and no emissaries of the King dare follow him. It was in vain I tried to induce him to return, even for one night, to the hotel, and I saw that to persist in my endeavors would be to hazard the little influence I still possessed over him. I could not, however, leave the poor fellow to his fate without at least the assurance of a home somewhere, and so I accompanied him to Ireland, and left him in that strange old ruin where we once so-journed together. His mind had gradually calmed down, but a deep melancholy had gained entire possession of him, and he passed whole days without a word. I saw that he often labored to recall some of the events of the interview with the King, but his memory had not retained them, and he seemed like one eternally engaged in some problem which his faculties could not solve.

"When I left him and arrived in town, I found the clubs full of the incident, but evidently without any real knowledge of what had occurred; since the version was that Glencore had asked an audience of the King, and gone down to the Pavilion to read to his Majesty a most atrocious narrative of the Queen's life in Italy, offering to substantiate—through his Italian connection—every allegation it contained—a proposal that, of course, was only received by the King in the light of an insult; and that this reception, so different from all his expectations, had turned his head and driven him completely insane!

"I believe now I have told you every-

thing as I heard it; indeed, I have given you Glencore's own words, since, without them, I could not convey to you what he intended to say. The whole affair is a puzzle to me, for I am unable to tell when the poor fellow's brain was wandering, and when he spoke under the guidance of right reason. You, of course, have the clue to it all."

"I! How so?" cried Upton.

"You have seen the letter which caused all the trouble; you know its contents and what it treats of."

"Very true; I must have read it; but I have not the slightest recollection of what it was about. There was something, I know, about Glencore's boy—he was called Greppi, though, and might not have been recognized; and there was some gossip about the Princess of Wales—the Queen, as they call her now—and her ladies; but I must frankly confess it did not interest me, and I have forgotten it all."

"Is the writer of the letter to be come at?"

"Nothing easier. I'll take you over to breakfast with her to-morrow morning; you shall catechize her yourself."

"O! she is, then——"

"She is the Princess Sabloukoff, my dear George, and a very charming person, as you will be the first to acknowledge. But as to this interview at Brighton, I fancy—even from the disjointed narrative of Glencore—one can make a guess of what it portended. The King saw that my Lady Glencore—for so we must call her—knew some very important facts about the Queen, and wished to obtain them; and saw, too, that certain scandals, as the phrase goes, which attached to her ladyship, lay at another door. He fancied, not unreasonably, perhaps, that Glencore would be glad to hear this exculpation of his wife; and he calculated that by the boon of this intelligence, he could gain over Glencore to assist him in his project for a divorce. Don't you perceive, Harcourt, what an inestimable value it would have, to possess one single gentleman, one man or one woman of station, amid all this rabble that they are summoning throughout the world, to bring a shame upon England?"

"Then you incline to believe Lady Glencore blameless?" asked Harcourt, anxiously.

"I think well of every one, my charming Colonel. It is the only true philosophy in life. Be as severe as you please on all who injure yourself, but always be lenient to the faults that only damage your friends. You have no idea how much practical wisdom the maxim contains, nor what a fund of charity it provides."

"I'm ashamed to be so stupid; but I

must come back to my old question. Is all this story against Glencore's wife only a calumny?"

"And I must fall back upon my old remark, that all the rogues in the world are in jail; the people you see walking about and at large are unexceptionably honest—every man of them. Ah, my dear deputy assistant, adjutant, or commissary, or whatever it be, can you not perceive the more than folly of these perquisitions into character? You don't require that the ice should be strong enough to sustain a twenty-four pounder before you venture to put foot on it; enough that it is quite equal to your own weight; and so of the world at large—everybody, or nearly everybody, has virtues enough for all we want. This English habit—for it is essentially English—eternally investigating everything, is like the policy of a man who would fire a round shot every morning at his house to see if it was well and securely built."

"I don't, I can't agree with you," cried Harcourt.

"Be it so, my dear fellow; only don't give me your reasons, and at least I shall respect your motives."

"What would you do then, in Glencore's place? Let me ask you that."

"You may as well inquire how I should behave if I were a quadruped. Don't you perceive that I never could, by any possibility, place myself in such a false position? The man who, in a case of difficulty, takes counsel from his passions, is exactly like one who, being thirsty, fills himself out a bumper of aqua fortis and drinks it off."

"I wish with all my heart you'd give up aphorisms, and just tell me how we could serve this poor fellow; for I feel that there is a gleam of light breaking through his dark fortunes."

"When a man is in the state Glencore is now in, the best policy is to let him alone. They tell us that when Murat's blood was up, the Emperor always left him to his own guidance, since he either did something excessively brilliant, or made such a blunder as recalled him to subjection again. Let us treat our friend in this fashion, and wait. O, my worthy colonel, if you but knew what a secret there is in that same waiting policy. Many a game is won by letting the adversary move out of his turn."

"If all this subtlety be needed to guide a man in the plain road of life, what is to become of poor simple fellows like myself?"

"Let them never go far from home, Harcourt, and they'll always find their way back," said Upton, and his eyes twinkled with malicious drollery. "Come, now," said he, with a well-affected good nature of look and voice, "if I won't tell you what

I should counsel Glencore in this emergency, I'll do the next best thing—I'll tell you what advice you'd give him."

"Let us hear it, then," said the other.

"You'd send him abroad to search out his wife; ask her forgiveness for all the wrong he has done her; call out any man that whispered the shadow of a reproach against her, and go back to such domesticity as it might please Heaven to accord him."

"Certainly, if the woman has been unjustly dealt with——"

"There's the rock you always split on; you are everlasting in search of a character. Be satisfied when you have eaten a hearty breakfast, and don't ask for a bill of health. Researches are always dangerous. My great grandfather, who had a passion for genealogy, was cured of it by discovering that the first of the family was a stay-maker! Let the lesson not be lost on us."

"From all which I am to deduce that you'd ask no questions—take her home again, and say nothing."

"You forget, Harcourt, we are now discussing the line of action *you* would recommend; I am only hinting at the best mode of carrying out *your* ideas."

"Just for the pleasure of showing me that I didn't know how to walk in the road I made myself," said Harcourt, laughing.

"What a happy laugh that was, Harcourt. How plainly, too, it said, Thank Heaven, I'm not like that fellow with all his craft! And you are right, too, my dear friend; if the devil were to walk the world he'd be bored beyond endurance, seeing nothing but the old vices played over again and again; and so it is with all of us who have a spice of his nature. We'd give anything to see one new trick on the cards. Good night, and pleasant dreams to you;" and with a sigh that had in its cadence something almost natural, he gave his two fingers to the honest grasp of the other, and withdrew.

"You're a better fellow than you think yourself, or wish any one else to believe you," muttered Harcourt, as he puffed his cigar; and he ruminated over this reflection till it was bed-time.

#### CHAPTER XL.

##### UPTONISM.

ABOUT noon on the following day, Sir Horace Upton and the Colonel drove up to the gate of the villa at Sorrento, and learned, to their no small astonishment, that the Princess had taken her departure that morning for Como. If Upton heard these tidings with a sense of pain, nothing in his manner betrayed the sentiment; on the contrary, he proceeded to do the honors of



the place like its owner. He showed Harcourt the grounds and the gardens, pointed out all the choice points of view, directed his attention to rare plants and curious animals; and then led him within doors to admire the objects of art and luxury which abounded there.

"And that, I conclude, is a portrait of the Princess," said Harcourt, as he stood before what had been a flattering likeness twenty years back.

"Yes, and a wonderful resemblance," said Upton, eyeing it through his glass. "Fatter and fuller now, perhaps; but it was done after an illness."

"By Jove," muttered Harcourt, "she must be very beautiful; I don't think I ever saw a handsomer woman!"

"You are only repeating a European verdict. She is the most perfectly beautiful woman of the Continent."

"So there is no flattery in that picture?"

"Flattery! Why, my dear fellow, these people, the very cleverest of them, can't imagine anything as lovely as that. They can imitate—they never invent real beauty."

"And clever, you say, too?"

"Spirit enough for a dozen reviewers, and fifty fashionable novelists," and as he spoke he smiled and coquetted with the portrait, as though to say, "Don't mind me saying all this to your face."

"I suppose her history is a very interesting one."

"Her history, my worthy Harcourt! She has a dozen histories. Such women have a life of politics, a life of literature, a life of the salons, a life of the affections, not to speak of the episodes of jealousy, ambition, triumph, and sometimes defeat, that make up the brilliant web of their existence. Some three or four such people give the whole character and tone to the age they live in. They mould its interests, sway its fashions, suggest its tastes, and they finally rule those who fancy that they rule mankind."

"Egad, then, it makes one very sorry for poor mankind," muttered Harcourt, with a most honest sincerity of voice.

"Why should it do so, my good Harcourt? Is the refinement of a woman's intellect a worse guide than the coarser instincts of a man's nature? Would you not yourself rather trust your destinies to that fair creature yonder, than be left to the legislative mercies of that old gentleman there, that Hardenberg; or his fellow on the other side, Metternich?"

"Grim looking fellow the Prussian—the other is much better," said Harcourt, rather evading the question.

"I confess I prefer the Princess," said Upton, as he bowed before the portrait in

deepest courtesy. "But here comes breakfast. I have ordered them to give it to us here, that we may enjoy that glorious sea-view while we eat."

"I thought your cook a man of genius, Upton, but this fellow is his master," said Harcourt, as he tasted his soup.

"They are brothers—twins too; and they have their separate gifts," said Upton, affectedly. "My fellow, they tell me, has the finer intelligence, but he plays deeply, speculates in the Bourse, and spoils his nerve."

Harcourt watched the delivery of this speech to catch if there were any signs of raillery in the speaker; he felt that there was a kind of mockery in the words, but there was none in the manner, for there was not any in the mind of him who uttered them.

"My chef," resumed Upton, "is a great essayist, who must have time for his efforts. This fellow is a feuilleton writer, who is required to be new and sparkling every day of the year—always varied, never profound."

"And is this your life of every day?" said Harcourt, as he surveyed the splendid room, and carried his glance towards the terraced gardens that flanked the sea.

"Pretty much this kind of thing," sighed Upton, wearily.

"And no great hardship either, I should call it."

"No, certainly not," said the other, hesitatingly. "To one like myself, for instance, who has no health for the wear and tear of public life, and no heart for its ambitions, there is a great deal to like in the quiet retirement of a first-class mission."

"Is there really then nothing to do?" asked Harcourt, innocently.

"Nothing, if you don't make it for yourself. You can have a harvest if you like to sow. Otherwise you may lie in fallow the year long. The subordinates take the petty miseries of diplomacy for *their* share—the sorrows of insulted Englishmen, the passport difficulties, the custom-house troubles, the Police insults. The Secretary calls at the offices of the Governor, carries messages and the answers; and I, when I have health for it, make my compliments to the King, in a cocked-hat, on his birthday, and have twelve grease pots illuminated over my door to honor the same festival."

"And is that all?"

"Very nearly, in fact. When one does anything more, they generally do wrong; and by a steady persistence in this kind of thing for thirty years, you are called a safe man, who never compromised his Government, and sure to be employed by any party in power."

"I begin to think I might be an envoy myself," said Harcourt.

"No doubt of it; we have two or three of your calibre in Germany this moment—men liked and respected; and what is of more consequence, men looked upon in the Office."

"I don't exactly follow you in that last remark."

"I scarcely expected you should; and as little can I make it clear to you. Know, however, that in that venerable pile in Downing-street, called the Foreign Office, there is a strange, mysterious sentiment—partly tradition, partly prejudice, partly toadyism—which bands together all within its walls, from the whiskered porter at the door to the essenced minister in his bureau, into one intellectual conglomerate, that judges of every man in the line—as they call diplomacy—with one accord. By that curious tribunal, which hears no evidence, nor ever utters a sentence, each man's merits are weighed; and to stand well in the Office is better than all the favors of the court, or the force of great abilities."

"But I cannot comprehend how mere subordinates, the underlings of official life, can possibly influence the fortunes of men so much above them."

"Picture to yourself the position of an humble guest at a great man's table; imagine one to whose pretensions the sentiments of the servants' hall are hostile; he is served to all appearance like the rest of the company; he gets his soup and his fish like those about him, and his wine glass is duly replenished—yet what a series of petty mortifications is he the victim of; how constantly is he made to feel that he is not in public favor; how certain, too, if he incur an awkwardness, to find that his distresses are exposed. The servants' hall is the Office, my dear Harcourt, and its persecutions are equally polished."

"Are you a favorite there yourself?" asked the other, slyly.

"A prime favorite; they all like me!" said he, throwing himself back in his chair, with an air of easy self-satisfaction; and Harcourt stared at him, curious to know whether so astute a man was the dupe of his own self-esteem, or merely amusing himself with the simplicity of another. Ah, my good colonel, give up the problem, it is an enigma far above your powers to solve. That nature is too complex for your elucidation: in its intricate web no one thread holds the clue, but all is complicated, crossed, and entangled.

"Here comes a Cabinet messenger again," said Upton, as a courier's caleche drove up, and a well-dressed and well-looking fellow leaped out.

"Ah, Stanhope, how are you?" said Sir Horace, shaking his hand with what from him was warmth. "Do you know Colonel Harcourt? Well, Frank, what news do you bring me?"

"The best of news."

"At F. O. I suppose," said Upton, sighing.

"Just so." Adderley has told the King you are the only man capable to succeed him. The Press says the same, and the clubs are all with you."

"Not one of them all, I'd venture to say, has asked whether I have the strength or health for it," said Sir Horace, with a voice of pathetic intonation.

"Why, as we never knew you want energy for whatever fell to your lot to do, we have the same hope still," said Stanhope.

"So say I, too," cried Harcourt. "Like many a good hunter—he'll do his work best when he is properly weighted."

"It is quite refreshing to listen to you both—creatures with crocodile digestion—talk to a man who suffers night-mare if he over-eat a dry biscuit at supper. I tell you frankly it would be the death of me to take the Foreign Office. I'd not live through the session—the very dinners would kill me, and the house, the heat, and the turmoil, and the worry of opposition, and jaunting back and forward to Brighton or to Windsor."

While he muttered these complaints, he continued to read with great rapidity the letters which Stanhope had brought him, and which, despite all his practised dissimulation, had evidently afforded him pleasure in the perusal.

"Adderley bore it," continued he, "just because he was a mere machine, wound up to play off so many dispatches, like so many tunes; and then he permitted a degree of interference on the King's part I never could have suffered; and he liked to be addressed by the King of Prussia as 'Dear Adderley;' but what do I care for all these vanities? Have I not seen enough of the thing they call the great world? Is not this retreat better and dearer to me than all the glare and crash of London, or all the pomp and splendor of Windsor?"

"By Jove, I suspect you are right, after all," said Harcourt, with an honest energy of voice.

"Were I younger, and stronger in health, perhaps," said Upton, "this might have tempted me. Perhaps I can picture to myself what I might have made of it; for, you may perceive, George, these people have done nothing; they have been pouring hot water on the tea-leaves Pitt left them; no more."



"And you'd have a brewing of your own, I've no doubt," responded the other.

"I'd, at least, have foreseen the time when this compact, this holy alliance, should become impossible—when the developed intelligence of Europe would seek something else from their rulers than a well concocted scheme of repression. I'd have provided for the hour when England must either break with her own people or her allies; and I'd have inaugurated a new policy, based upon the enlarged views and extended intelligence of mankind."

"I'm not certain that I quite apprehend you," muttered Harcourt.

"No matter; but you can surely understand that if a set of mere mediocrities have saved England, a batch of clever men might have done something more. She came out of the last war the acknowledged head of Europe; does she now hold that place, and what will she be at the next great struggle?"

"England is as great as ever she was," cried Harcourt, boldly.

"Greater in nothing is she than in the implicit credulity of her people!" sighed Upton. "I only wish I could have the same faith in my physicians that she has in hers! By the way, Stanhope, what of that new fellow they have got at St. Leonard's? They tell me he builds you up in some preparation of gypsum, so that you can't move or stir, and that the perfect repose thus imparted to the system is the highest order of restorative."

"They were just about to try him for manslaughter when I left England," said Stanhope, laughing.

"As often the fate of genius in these days as in more barbarous times," said Upton. "I read his pamphlet with much interest. If you were going back, Harcourt, I'd have begged of you to try him."

"And I'm forced to say, I'd have refused you flatly."

"Yet it is precisely creatures of robust constitution, like you, that should submit themselves to these trials for the sake of

humanity. Frail organizations, like mine, cannot brave these ordeals. What are they talking of in town? Any gossip afloat?"

"The change of ministry is the only topic. Glencore's affair has worn itself out."

"What was that about Glencore?" asked Upton, half indolently.

"A strange story; one can scarcely believe it. They say that Glencore, hearing of the King's great anxiety to be rid of the Queen, asked an audience of his Majesty, and actually suggested, as the best possible expedient, to adopt his own plan, and deny the marriage. They add, that he reasoned the case so cleverly, and with such consummate craft and skill, it was with the greatest difficulty that the king could be persuaded that he was deranged. Some say his Majesty was outraged beyond endurance: others, that he was vastly amused, and laughed immoderately over it."

"And the world, how do they pronounce upon it?"

"There are two great parties—one for Glencore's sanity, the other against; but, as I said before, the Cabinet changes have absorbed all interest latterly, and the Viscount and his case are forgotten; and when I started, the great question was, who was to have the Foreign Office."

"I believe I could tell them one who will not," said Upton, with a melancholy smile. "Dine with me both of you to-day, at seven; no company, you know. There is an opera in the evening, and my box is at your service if you like to go, and so till then," and with a little gesture of the hand he waved an adieu, and quitted the room.

"I'm sorry he's not up to the work of office," said Harcourt, as he left the room; "there's plenty of ability in him."

"The best man we have," said Stanhope; "so they say at the Office."

"He's gone to lie down, I take it; he seemed much exhausted. What say you to a walk back to town?"

"I ask nothing better," said Stanhope; and they started for Naples.

## CHAPTER XLJ.

## AN EVENING IN FLORENCE.

THAT happy valley of the Val d'Arno, in which fair Florence stands, possesses, amidst all its virtues, none more conspicuous than the blessed forgetfulness of the past, so eminently the gift of those who dwell there. Faults and follies of a few years back have so faded by time as to be already historical; and as in certain climates rocks and stones become shrined by lichens and moss-covered in a year or two, so here, in equally brief space, by-gones are shrouded and shadowed in a way that nothing short of cruelty and violence could once more expose to view.

The palace where Lady Glencore once displayed all her attractions of beauty and toilette, and dispensed a hospitality of princely splendor, had remained for a course of time close-barred and shut up. The massive gate was locked, the windows shuttered, and curious tourists were told that there were objects of interest within, but it was impossible to obtain sight of them. The crowds who once flocked there at nightfall, and whose equipages filled the court, now drove on to other haunts, scarcely glancing, as they passed, at the darkened casements of the grim old edifice; when at length the rumor ran that "some one" had arrived there; lights were seen in the porter's lodge, the iron "grille" was observed to open and shut, and tradespeople came and went within the building; and finally the assurance gained ground that its former owner had returned.

"Only think who has come back to us," said one of the idlers of the Cascini, as he lounged on the steps of a fashionable carriage, "La Nina!" And at once the story went far and near, repeated at every corner and discussed in every circle; so that had a stranger to the place but caught the passing sounds, he would have heard that one name uttered in every group he encountered. La Nina! and why not the Countess of Glencore, or, at least, the Countess de la Torre? As when exiled Royalties assume titles in accordance with fallen fortunes, so in Italy, injured fame seeks sympathy in the familiarity of the Christian name, and "society" at once accept the designation as that of those who throw themselves upon the affectionate kindness of the world, rather than insist upon its reverence and respect.

Many of her former friends were still there; but there was also a numerous class, principally foreigners, who only knew of her by repute. The traditions of her beauty—her gracefulness—the charms of her demeanor, and the brilliancy of her diamonds, abounded. Her admirers were of all ages,

from those who worshipped her loveliness, to that not less enthusiastic section who swore by her cook; and it was indeed "great tidings" to hear that she had returned.

Some statistician has asserted that no less than a hundred thousand people awake every day in London, not one of whom knows where he will pass the night. Now Florence is but a small city; and the lacquered-boot-class bear but a slight proportion to the shoeless herd of humanity. Yet there is a very tolerable sprinkling of well dressed, well got-up individuals, who daily arise without the very vaguest conception of who is to house them, fire them, light them, and cigar them for the evening. They are an interesting class, and have this strong appeal to human sympathy, that not one of them, by any possible effort, can contribute to his own support.

They toil not—neither do they spin. They have the very fewest of social qualities; they possess no conversational gifts; they are not even moderately good reporters of the passing events of the day. And yet, strange to say, the world they live in seems to have some need of them. Are they the last relics of a once gifted class—worn out, effete, and exhausted—degenerated like modern Greeks from those who once shook the Parthenon? or are they what anatomists call "rudimentary" structures—the first abortive attempts of nature to fashion something profitable and good? Who knows?

Amidst this class the Nina's arrival was announced as the happiest of all tidings; and speculation immediately set to work to imagine who would be the favorites of the house, what would be its habits and hours; would she again enter the great world of society; or would she, as her quiet unannounced arrival portended, seek a less conspicuous position? Nor was this the mere talk of the cafés and the Cascini. The salons were eagerly discussing the very same theme.

In certain social conditions a degree of astuteness is acquired as to who may and who may not be visited, that, in its tortuous intricacy of reasons, would puzzle the craftiest head that ever wagged in Equity. Not that the code is a severe one; it is exactly in its lenity lies its difficulty—so much may be done, but so little may be fatal! The Countess in the present case enjoyed what in England is reckoned a great privilege—she was tried by her peers—or "something more." They were, however, all nice discriminators as to the class of case before them, and they knew well what danger there was in admitting to their "guild," any with a little more disgrace than their neighbors. It was curious enough that she, in whose behalf all this solicitude was excited, should have been less than in-



different as to the result; and when, on the third day of the trial, a verdict was delivered in her favor, and a shower of visiting cards at the porter's lodge declared that the act of her recognition had passed, her orders were that the cards should be sent back to their owners, as the Countess had not the honor of their acquaintance.

"Les grands coups se font respectés toujours," was the maxim of a great tactician in war and politics; and the adage is no less true in questions of social life. We are so apt to compute the strength of resources by the amount of pretension, that we often yield the victory to the mere declaration of force. We are not, however, about to dwell on this theme—our business being less with those who discussed her, than with the Countess of Glencore herself.

In a large salon, hung with costly tapestries, and furnished in the most expensive style, sat two ladies at opposite sides of the fire. They were both richly dressed, and one of them (it was Lady Glencore), as she held a screen before her face, displayed a number of valuable rings on her fingers, and a massive bracelet of enamel with a large emerald pendant. The other, not less magnificently attired, wore an imperial portrait suspended by a chain around her neck, and a small knot of white and green ribbon on her shoulder, to denote her quality of a lady-in-waiting at court. There was something almost queenly in the haughty dignity of her manner, and an air of command in the tone with which she addressed her companion. It was our acquaintance the Princess Sabloukoff, just escaped from a dinner and reception at the Pitti Palace, and carrying away with her some of the proud traditions of the society she had quitted.

"What hour did you tell them they might come, Nina?" asked she.

"Not before midnight, my dear Princess; I wanted to have a talk with you first. It is long since we have met, and I have so much to tell you."

"*Cara mia*," said the other, carelessly; "I know every thing already. There is nothing you have done, nothing that has happened to you, that I am not aware of. I might go farther and say, that I have looked with secret pleasure at the course of events which to your short-sightedness seemed disastrous."

"I can scarce conceive that possible," said the Countess, sighing.

"Naturally enough, perhaps, because you never knew the greatest of all blessings in this life, which is—liberty. Separation from your husband, my dear Nina, did not emancipate you from the tiresome requirements of the world. You got rid of him,

to be sure, but not of those who regarded you as his wife. It required the act of courage by which you cut with these people forever, to assert the freedom I speak of."

"I almost shudder at the contest I have provoked, and had you not insisted on it——"

"You had gone back again to the old slavery, to be pitied and compassionated, and condoled with instead of being feared and envied," said the other; and as she spoke, her flashing eyes and quivering brows gave an expression almost tiger-like to her features. "What was there about your house and its habits distinctive before? What gave you any preëminence above those that surrounded you? You were better looking yourself; better dressed; your salons better lighted; your dinners more choice—there was the end of it. Your company was *their* company—your associates were *theirs*. The homage *you* received to-day had been yesterday the incense of another. There was not a bouquet nor a flattery offered to *you* that had not its *fac simile* doing service in some other quarter. You were one of them, Nina, obliged to follow their laws and subscribe to their ideas; and while *they* traded on the wealth of your attractions, *you* derived nothing from the partnership but the same share as those about you."

"And how will it be now?" asked the Countess, half in fear, half in hope.

"How will it be now? I'll tell you. This house will be the resort of every distinguished man, not of Italy, but of the world at large. Here will come the highest of every nation, as to a circle where they can say, and hear, and suggest a thousand things in the freedom of unauthorized intercourse. You will drain not Florence alone, but all the great cities of Europe, of its best talkers and deepest thinkers. The statesman and the author, and the sculptor and the musician will hasten to a neutral territory, where for the time a kind of equality will prevail. The weary minister, escaping from a court festival, will come here to unbend; the witty converser will store himself with his best resources for your salons. There will be all the freedom of a club to these men, with the added charm of that fascination your presence will confer; and thus through their intercourse will be felt that '*parfum de femme*,' as Balzac calls it, which both elevates and entrances."

"But will not society revenge itself on all this?"

"It will try, and fail. It will invent a hundred calumnious reports and shocking stories, but these, like the criticisms on an immoral play, will only serve to fill the house. Men—even the quiet ones—will be

eager to see what it is that constitutes the charm of these gatherings; and one charm there is that never misses its success. Have you ever experienced, in visiting some great gallery, or still more, some choice collection of works of art, a strange, mysterious sense of awe for objects which you rather knew to be great by the testimony of others, than felt able personally to appreciate? You were conscious that the picture was painted by Raphael, or the cup carved by Cellini, and, independently of all the pleasure it yielded you, arose a sense of homage to its actual worth. The same is the case in society with illustrious men. They may seem slower of apprehension, less ready at reply, less apt to understand, but there they are, Originals, not Copies of greatness. They represent value."

Have we said enough to show our reader the kind of persuasion by which Madame de Sabloulkoff led her friend into this new path? The flattery of the argument was, after all, its success, and the Countess was fascinated by fancying herself something more than the handiwork and the best-dressed woman in Florence. They who constitute a free port of their house will have certainly abundance of trade, and invite also no small amount of enterprise.

A little after midnight the salons began to fill, and from the opera and the other theatres flocked in all that was pleasant, fashionable, and idle of Florence. The old beau, painted, padded, and essenced, came with the younger and not less elaborately dressed "fashionable," great in watch-chains and splendid in waistcoat buttons; long-haired artists and mustached hussars mingled with close-shaven actors and pale-faced authors; men of the world, of politics, of finance, of letters, of the turf,—all were there. There was the gossip of the bourse and the cabinet—the green-room and the stable. The scandal of society, the events of club life, the world's doings in dinners, divorces, and duels were all revealed and discussed, amidst the most profuse gratitude to the Countess for coming back again to that society which scarcely survived her desertion.

They were not, it is but fair to say, all that the Princess Sabloulkoff had depicted them; but there was still a very fair sprinkling of witty, pleasant talkers. The ease of admission permitted any former intimate to present his friend, and thus at once, on the very first night of receiving, the Countess saw her salons crowded. They smoked and sung and laughed, and played *carté*, and told good stories. They drew caricatures, imitated well-known actors and even preachers, talking away with a volubility

that left few listeners; and then there was a supper laid out on a table too small to accommodate even by standing, so that each carried away his plate, and bivouacked with others of his friends, here and there, through the rooms. All was contrived to impart a sense of independence and freedom—all to convey an impression of "license" special to the place, that made the most rigid unbend and relaxed the gravity of many who seldom laughed.

As in certain chemical compounds a mere drop of some one powerful ingredient will change the whole property of the mass, eliciting new elements, correcting this, developing that, and even to the eye announcing by altered color the wondrous change accomplished; so here the element of womanhood, infinitely small in proportion as it was, imparted a tone and a refinement to this orgie, which, without it, had degenerated into coarseness. The Countess' beautiful niece, Ida Della Torre, was also there, singing at times with all an artist's excellence the triumphs of operatic music; at others warbling over those "canzonettes," which, to Italian ears, embody all that they know of love of country. How could such a reception be other than successful; or how could the guests, as they poured forth into the silent street at daybreak, do aught but exult that such a house was added to the haunts of Florence—so lovely a group had returned to adorn their fair city?

In a burst of this enthusiastic gratitude they sang a serenade before they separated; and, then, as the closed curtains showed them that the inmates had left the windows, they uttered the last "*felice Notte*" and departed.

"And so Wahnsdorf never made his appearance?" said the Princess, as she was once more alone with the Countess.

"I scarcely expected him. He knows the ill-feeling towards his countrymen amongst Italians, and he rarely enters society where he may meet them."

"It is strange that he should marry one!" said she, half musingly.

"He fell in love—there's the whole secret of it," said the Countess. "He fell in love, and his passion encountered certain difficulties. His rank was one of them; Ida's indifference another."

"And how have they been got over?"

"Evaded rather than surmounted. He has only his own consent after all."

"And Ida, does she care for him?"

"I suspect not: but she will marry him. Pique will often do what affection would fail in. The secret history of the affair is this. There was a youth at Massa, who, while he lived there, made our acquaintance



and became even intimate at the Villa; he was a sculptor of some talent, and, as many thought, of considerable promise. I engaged him to give Ida lessons in modelling, and, in this way, they were constantly together. Whether Ida liked him or not I cannot say, but it is beyond a doubt that he loved her. In fact, every thing he produced in his art only showed what his mind was full of—her image was everywhere. This aroused Wahnsdorf's jealousy, and he urged me strongly to dismiss Greppi, and shut my doors to him. At first I consented, for I had a strange sense, not exactly of dislike, but misgiving, of the youth. I had a feeling towards him that if I attempted to convey to you, it would seem as though in all this affair I had suffered myself to be blinded by passion, not guided by reason. There were times that I felt a deep interest in the youth—his genius, his ardor, his very poverty engaged my sympathy; and then, stronger than all these was a strange, mysterious sense of terror at sight of him, for he was the very image of one who has worked all the evil of my life."

"Was not this a mere fancy?" said the Princess, compassionately, for she saw the shuddering emotion these words had cost her.

"It was not alone his look," continued the Countess, speaking now with impetuous eagerness; "it was not merely his features, but their every play and movement; his gestures when excited; the very voice was *his*. I saw him once excited to violent passion; it was some taunt that Wahnsdorf uttered about men of unknown or ignoble origin; and then He—he himself seemed to stand before me as I have so often seen him, in his terrible outbursts of rage. The sight brought back to me the terrible recollection of those scenes—scenes," said she, looking wildly around her, "that, if these old walls could speak, might freeze your heart where you are sitting.

"You have heard, but you cannot know, the miserable life we led together; the frantic jealousy that maddened every hour of his existence; how, in all the harmless freedom of our Italian life, he saw causes of suspicion and distrust; how, by his rudeness to this one, his coldness to that, he estranged me from all who have been my dearest intimates and friends, dictating to me the while the customs of a land and a people I had never seen nor wished to see; till at last I was left a mockery to some, an object of pity to others, amidst a society where once I reigned supreme—and all for a man that I had ceased to love! It was from this same life of misery, unrewarded by the affection by which jealousy sometimes compensates

for its tyranny, that I escaped, to attach myself to the fortunes of that unhappy Princess whose lot bore some resemblance to my own.

"I know well that he ascribed my desertion to another cause, and—shall I own to you?—I had a savage pleasure in leaving him to the delusion. It was the only vengeance within my reach, and I grasped it with eagerness. Nothing was easier for me than to disprove it,—a mere word would have shown the falsehood of the charge, but I would not utter it. I knew his nature well, and that the insult to his name and the stain to his honor would be the heaviest of all injuries to him; and they were so. He drove *me* from my home—I banished *him* from the world. It is true I never reckoned on the cruel blow he had yet in store for me, and when it fell, I was crushed and stunned. There was now a declared war between us—each to do his worst to the other. It was less succumbing before him, than to meditate and determine on the future, that I fled from Florence. It was not here and in such a society I should have to blush for any imputation. But I had always held my place proudly, perhaps too proudly, here, and I did not care to enter upon that campaign of defence—that stooping to cultivate alliances—that humble game of conciliation—that must ensue.

"I went away into banishment. I went to Corsica, and thence to Massa. I was meditating a journey to the East. I was even speculating on establishing myself there for the rest of my life, when your letters changed my plans. You once more kindled in my heart a love of life by instilling a love of vengeance. You suggested to me the idea of coming back here boldly and confronting the world proudly."

"Do not mistake me, Nina," said the Princess, "the 'Vendetta' was the last thing in my thoughts. I was too deeply concerned for you, to be turned away from my object by any distracting influence. It was that you should give a bold denial—the boldest—to your husband's calumny, I counselled your return. My advice was—Disregard, and, by disregarding, deny the foul slander he has invented. Go back to the world in the rank that is yours and that you never forfeited, and then challenge him to oppose your claim to it."

"And do you think that for such a consideration as this—the honor to bear the name of a man I loathe—that I'd face that world I know so well? No, no; believe me I had very different reasons. I was resolved that my future life, *my* name, *his* name, should gain an European notoriety. I am well aware that when a woman is made a

public talk, when once her name comes sufficiently often uppermost before the world, let it be for what you will, her beauty, her will, her extravagance, her dress, from that hour her fame is perilled, and the society she has overtopped take their vengeance in slandering her character. To be before the world as a woman is to be arraigned. If ever there was a man who dreaded such a destiny for his wife, it was *he*. The impertinences of the press had greater terrors for his heart than aught else in life, and I resolved that he should taste them."

"How have you mistaken—how have you misunderstood me, Nina!" said the Princess, sorrowfully.

"Not so," cried she, eagerly. "You only saw one advantage in the plan you counselled. I perceived that it contained a double benefit."

"But remember, dearest Nina, revenge is the most costly of all pleasures, if one pays for it with all that they possess—their tranquillity. I myself might have indulged such thoughts as yours; there were many points alike in our fortunes; but to have followed such a course would be like the wisdom of one who inoculates himself with a deadly malady that he may impart the poison to another."

"Must I again tell you, that in all I have done I cared less how it might serve *me* than how it might wound *him*? I know you cannot understand this sentiment; I do not ask of you to sympathize with it. Your talents enabled you to shape out a high and ambitious career for yourself. You loved the great intrigues of state, and were well fitted to conduct or control them. None such gifts were mine. I was and I am still a mere creature of society. I never soared even in fancy beyond the triumphs which the world of fashion decrees. A cruel destiny excluded me from the pleasures of a life that would have amply satisfied me, and there is nothing left but to avenge myself on the cause."

"My dearest Nina, with all your self-stimulation you cannot make yourself the vindictive creature you would appear," said the Princess, smiling.

"How little do you know my Italian blood!" said the other, passionately. "That boy—he was not much more than boy—that Greppi was, as I told you, the very image of Glencore. The same dark skin, the same heavy brow, the same cold stern look which even a smile did not enliven; even to the impassive air with which he listened to a provocation—all were alike. Well, the resemblance cost him dearly. I consented at last to Wahnsdorf's continual

entreaty to exclude him from the Villa, and charged the Count with the commission. I am not sure that he expended an excess of delicacy on the task—I half fear me that he did the act more rudely than was needed. At all events a quarrel was the result, and a challenge to a duel. I only knew of this when all was over—believe me, I should never have permitted it. However, the result was as safe in the hands of Fate. The youth fled from Massa, and though Wahnsdorf followed him, they never met."

"There was no duel, you say?" cried the Princess, eagerly.

"How could there be? This Greppi never went to the rendezvous. He quitted Massa during the night, and has never since been heard of. In this, I own to you, he was not like *him*;" and as she said the words, the tears swam in her eyes and rolled down her cheeks.

"May I ask you how you learned all this?"

"From Wahnsdorf; on his return in a week or two, he told me all. Ida at first would not believe it, but how could she discredit what was plain and palpable? Greppi was gone. All the inquiries of the police were in vain as to his route—none could guess how he had escaped."

"And this account was given you—you yourself—by Wahnsdorf?" repeated the Princess.

"Yes, to myself; why should he have concealed it?"

"And now he is to marry Ida?" said the Princess, half musingly to herself.

"We hope with *your* aid that it may be so. The family difficulties are great; Wahnsdorf's rank is not ours, but he persists in saying that to your management nothing is impossible."

"His opinion is too flattering," said the Princess, with a cold gravity of manner.

"But you surely will not refuse us your assistance?"

"You may count upon me even for more than you ask," said the Princess, rising. "How late it is: day is breaking already;" and so with a tender embrace they parted.

#### CHAPTER XLII.

##### MADAME DE SABLONKOFF IN THE MORNING.

MADAME DE SABLONKOFF inhabited "the grand apartment" of the Hotel d'Italie, which is the handsomest quarter of the great hotel of Florence. The same suite which had once the distinguished honor of receiving a Czar and a King of Prussia, and Heaven knows how many lesser potentates! was now devoted to one who, though not of the



small number of the elect-in-purple, was yet, in her way, what politicians call a "Puisseance."

As in the drama a vast number of agencies are required for the due performance of a piece, so in the great stage of life many of the chief motive powers rarely are known to the public eye. The Princess was of this number. She was behind the scenes in more than one sense, and had her share in the great events of her time.

While her beauty lasted, she had traded on the great capital of attractions, which were unsurpassed in Europe. As the perishable flower faded, she, with prudential foresight, laid up a treasure in secret knowledge of people and their acts, which made her dreaded and feared where she was once admired and flattered. Perhaps, it is by no means improbable, she preferred this latter tribute to the former.

Although the strong sunlight was tempered by the closed jealousies and the drawn muslin curtains, she sat with her back to the window, so that her features were but dimly visible in the darkened atmosphere of the room. There was something of coquetry in this; but there was more—there was a dash of semi-secrecy in the air of gloom and stillness around, which gave to each visitor who presented himself,—and she received but one at a time,—an impression of being admitted to an audience of confidence and trust. The mute-like servant who waited in the corridor without, and who drew back a massive curtain on your entrance, also aided the delusion, imparting to the interview a character of mysterious solemnity.

Through that solemn portal there had passed in and out during the morning, various dignitaries of the land, ministers and envoys, and grand "chargés" of the court. The embroidered key of the chamberlain and the purplestockings of a nuncio had come and gone; and now there was a brief pause, for the groom-in-waiting had informed the crowd in the antechamber that the Princess could receive no more. Then there was a hurried scrawling of great names in a large book, a shower of visiting cards, and all was over—the fine equipages of fine people dashed off, and the court-yard of the hotel was empty.

The large clock on the mantel-piece struck three, and Madame de Sabloukoff compared the time with her watch, and by a movement of impatience showed a feeling of displeasure. She was not accustomed to have her appointments lightly treated, and he for whom she had fixed an hour was now thirty minutes behind his time. She had been known to resent such unpunctuality, and she looked as though she might do so again. "I remember the day when his grand-uncle

descended from his carriage to speak to me," muttered she; "and that same grand-uncle was an Emperor."

Perhaps the chance reflection of her image in the large glass before her somewhat embittered the recollection, for her features flushed, and as suddenly grew pale again. It may have been that her mind went rapidly back to a period when her fascination was a despotism that even the highest and the haughtiest obeyed. "Too true," said she, speaking to herself, "time has dealt heavily with us all. But they are no more what they once were than am I. Their old compact of mutual assistance is crumbling away under the pressure of new rivalries and new pretensions. Kings and Kaisers will soon be like by-gone beauties. I wonder will they bear their altered fortune as heroically." It is but just to say that her tremulous accents and quivering lip bore little evidence of the heroism she spoke of.

She rang the bell violently, and as the servant entered she said, but in a voice of perfect unconcern, "When the Count Von Wahnsdorf calls, you will tell him that I am engaged, but will receive him to-morrow—"

"And why not to-day? charming Princess," said a young man, entering hastily, and whose graceful but somewhat haughty air set off to every advantage his splendid Hungarian costume. "Why not now?" said he, stooping to kiss her hand with respectful gallantry. She motioned to the servant to withdraw, and they were alone.

"You are not over exact in keeping an appointment, Monsieur," said she, stiffly. "It is somewhat cruel to remind me that my claims in this respect have grown antiquated."

"I fancied myself the soul of punctuality, my dear Princess," said he, adjusting the embroidered scarf he wore over his shoulder. "You mentioned four as the hour—"

"I said three o'clock," replied she, coldly.

"Three, or four, or even five, what does it signify?" said he, carelessly. "We have not, either of us, I suspect, much occupation to engage us; and if I have not interfered with your other plans—if you have plans—a thousand pardons!" cried he, suddenly, as the deep color of her face and her flashing eye warned him that he had gone too far; "but the fact is, I was detained at the riding school. They have sent me some young horses from the Banat, and I went over to look at them."

"The Count de Wahnsdorf knows that he need make no apologies to Madame de Sabloukoff," said she, calmly; "but it were

just as graceful, perhaps, to affect them. My dear Count," continued she, but in a tone perfectly free from all touch of irritation, "I have asked to see and speak with you on matters purely your own——"

"You want to dissuade me from this marriage," said he, interrupting; "but I fancy that I have already listened to every thing that can be urged on that affair. If you have any argument other than the old one about misalliance and the rest of it, I'll hear it patiently; though I tell you beforehand that I should like to learn that a connection with an imperial house had some advantage besides that of a continual barrier to one's wishes."

"I understand," said she, quietly, "that you named the terms on which you would abandon this project—is it not so?"

"Who told you that?" cried he, angrily. "Is this another specimen of the delicacy with which ministers treat a person of my station?"

"To discuss that point, Count, would lead us wide of our mark. Am I to conclude that my informant was correct?"

"How can I tell what may have been reported to you?" said he, almost rudely.

"You shall hear and judge for yourself," was the calm answer. "Count Kollorath informed me that you offered to abandon this marriage, on condition that you were appointed to the command of the Pahlen Hussars."

The young man's face became scarlet with shame, and he tried twice to speak, but unavailingly.

With a merciless slowness of utterance, and a manner of the most unmoved sternness, she went on: "I did not deem the proposal at all exorbitant. It was a price that they could well afford to pay."

"Well, they refused me," said he bluntly.

"Not exactly refused you," said she, more gently. "They reminded you of the necessity of conforming, or at least appearing to conform, to the rules of the service; that you had only been a few months in command of a squadron; that your debts, which were considerable, had been noised about the world, so that a little time should elapse and a favorable opportunity present itself before this promotion could be effected."

"How correctly they have instructed you in all the details of this affair!" said he, with a scornful smile.

"It is a rare event when I am misinformed, sir," was her cold reply; "nor could it redound to the advantage of those who ask my advice to afford me incorrect information."

"Then, I am quite unable to perceive

what you want with me," cried he. "It is plain enough you are in possession of all that I could tell you. Or is all this only the prelude to some menace or other?"

She made no other answer to this rude question than by a smile so dubious in its meaning, it might imply scorn, or pity, or even sorrow.

"You must not wonder if I be angry," continued he, in an accent that betokened shame at his own violence. "They have treated me so long as a fool that they have made me something worse than one."

"I am not offended by your warmth, Count," said she, softly. "It is, at least, the guarantee of your sincerity. I tell you, therefore, I have no threat to hold over you. It will be enough that I can show you the impolicy of the marriage;—I don't want to use a stronger word—what estrangement it will lead to as regards your own family, how inadequately it will respond to the sacrifices it will cost."

"That consideration is for me to think of, Madam," said he, proudly.

"And for your friends also," interposed she, softly.

"If by my friends you mean those who have watched every occasion of my life to oppose my plans and thwart my wishes, I conclude that they will prove themselves as vigilant now as heretofore; but I am getting somewhat weary of this friendship."

"My dear Count, give me a patient, if possible, an indulgent hearing for five minutes, or even half that time, and I hope it will save us both a world of misconception. If this marriage that you are so eager to contract were an affair of love, of that ardent passionate love which recognizes no obstacle nor acknowledges any barrier to its wishes, I could regard the question as one of those every-day events in life whose uniformity is seldom broken by a new incident; for love stories have a terrible sameness in them." She smiled as she said this, and in such a way as to make him smile at first, and then laugh heartily.

"But if," resumed she, seriously, "if I only see in this project a mere caprice—half, more than half, based upon the pleasure of wounding family pride, or of coercing those who have hitherto dictated to you; if, besides this, I perceive that there is no strong affection on either side—none of that impetuous passion which the world accepts as 'the attenuating circumstance' in rash marriages——"

"And who has told you that I do not love Ida, or that she is not devoted with her whole heart to me?" cried he, interrupting her.

"You yourself have told the first. You have shown by the price you have laid on the



object the value at which you estimate it. As for the latter part of your question—" She paused and arranged the folds of her shawl, purposely playing with his impatience, and enjoying it.

"Well," cried he, "as for the latter part, go on."

"It scarcely requires an answer. I saw Ida Della Torre last night in a society of which her affianced husband was not one; and, I will be bold enough to say, hers was not the bearing that bespoke engaged affections."

"Indeed!" said he, but in a tone that indicated neither displeasure nor surprise.

"It was as I have told you, Count. Surrounded by the youth of Florence, such as you know them, she laughed and talked and sung, in all the careless gaiety of a heart at ease; or, if, at moments a shade of sadness crossed her features, it was so brief that only one observing her closely as myself could mark it."

"And how did that subtle intelligence of yours interpret this show of sorrow?" said he, in a voice of mockery but yet of deep anxiety.

"My subtle intelligence was not taxed to guess, for I knew her secret," said the Princess, with all the strength of conscious power.

"Her secret, her secret," said he, eagerly; "what do you mean by that?"

The Princess smiled coldly, and said, "I have not yet found my frankness so well repaid that I should continue to expend it."

"What is the reward to be, Madam? Name it," said he, boldly.

"The same candor on your part, Count; I ask for no more."

"But what have I to reveal—what mystery is there that your omniscience has not penetrated?"

"There may be some that your frankness has not avowed, my dear Count."

"If you refer to what you have called Ida's secret—"

"No;" broke she in. "I was now alluding to what might be called *your* secret."

"Mine! *my* secret!" exclaimed he; but though the tone was meant to convey great astonishment, the confusion of his manner was far more apparent.

"Your secret, Count," she repeated, slowly, "which has been just as safe in my keeping as if it had been confided to me on honor."

"I was not aware how much I owed to your discretion, Madam," said he, scoffingly.

"I am but too happy when any services of mine can rescue the fame of a great family from reproach, sir," replied she,

proudly; for all the control she had heretofore imposed upon her temper seemed at last to have yielded to offended dignity. "Happily for that illustrious house, happily for you, too, I am one of a very few who know of Count Wahnsdorf's doings. To have suffered your antagonist in a duel to be tracked, arrested, and imprisoned in an Austrian fortress, when a word from you had either warned him of his peril or averted the danger, was bad enough; but to have stigmatized his name with cowardice, and to have defamed him because he was your rival, was far worse."

Wahnsdorf struck the table with his clenched fist till it shook beneath the blow, but never uttered a word, while with increased energy she continued:

"Every step of this bad history is known to me; every detail of it, from your gross and insulting provocation to this poor friendless youth, to the last scene of his committal to a dungeon."

"And, of course, you have related your interesting narrative to Ida?" cried he.

"No, sir; the respect which I have never lost for those whose name you bear had been quite enough to restrain me, had I not even other thoughts."

"And what may they be?" asked he.

"To take the first opportunity of finding myself alone with you, to represent how nearly it concerns your honor that this affair should never be bruited abroad; to insist upon your lending every aid to obtain this young man's liberation; to show that the provocation came from yourself; and, lastly, all painful though it be, to remove from him the stain you have inflicted, and to reinstate him in the esteem that your calumny may have robbed him of. These were the other thoughts I alluded to."

"And you fancy that I am to engage in this sea of trouble for the sake of some nameless bastard, while in doing so I compromise myself and my own honor?"

"Do you prefer that it should be done by another, Count Wahnsdorf?" asked she.

"This is a threat, Madam."

"All the speedier will the matter be settled if you understand it as such."

"And, of course, the next condition will be for me to resign my pretensions to Ida in his favor," said he, with a savage irony.

"I stipulate for nothing of the sort; Count Wahnsdorf's pretensions will be to-morrow just where they are to-day."

"You hold them cheaply, Madam. I am indeed unfortunate in all my pursuit of your esteem."

"You live in a sphere to command it, sir," was her reply, given with a counterfeited humility; and, whether it was the tone of

mingled insolence and submission she assumed, or simply the sense of his own unworthiness in her sight, but Wahnsdorf cowered before her like a frightened child. At this moment the servant entered, and presented a visiting card to the Princess.

"Ah, he comes in an opportune moment," cried she. "This is the minister of the Duke of Massa's household—the Chevalier Stubber. Yes," continued she to the servant, "I will receive him."

If there was not any conspicuous gracefulness in the Chevalier's approach, there was an air of quiet self-possession that bespoke a sense of his own worth and importance; and, while he turned to pay his respects to the young Count, his unpolished manner was not devoid of a certain dignity.

"It is a fortunate chance by which I find you here, Count Wahnsdorf," said he, "for you will be glad to learn that the young fellow you had that affair with at Massa has just been liberated."

"When? and how?" cried the Princess, hastily.

"As to the time, it must be about four days ago, as my letters inform me; as to the how, I fancy the Count can best inform you; he has interested himself greatly in the matter." The Count blushed deeply, and turned away to hide his face, but so quickly as to miss the expression of scornful meaning with which the Princess regarded him. "But I want to hear the details, Chevalier," said she.

"And I can give you none, Madam. My dispatches simply mention that the act of arrest was discovered in some way to be informal. Sir Horace Upton proved so much. There then arose a question of giving him up to us, but my master declined the honor; he would have no trouble he said with England or Englishmen; and some say that the youth claims an English nationality. The cabinet of Vienna are, perhaps, like-minded in the matter; at all events, he is free, and will be here to-morrow."

"Then I shall invite him to dinner, and beg both of you, gentlemen, to meet him," said she, with a voice wherein a tone of malicious drollery mingled.

"I am your servant, Madam," said Stubber.

"And I am engaged," said Wahnsdorf, taking up his shako.

"You are off for Vienna to-night, Count Wahnsdorf," whispered the Princess in his ear.

"What do you mean, Madam?" said he, in a tone equally low.

"Only that I have a letter written for the Archduchess Sophia, which I desire to intrust to your hands. You may as well read ere I seal it."

The Count took the letter from her hand, and retired towards the window to read it. While she conversed eagerly with Stubber, she did not fail from time to time to glance towards the other, and mark the expression of his features as he folded and replaced the letter in its envelope, and slowly approaching her, said:

"You are most discreet, Madam."

"I hope I am just, sir," said she, modestly.

"This was somewhat of a difficult undertaking, too," said he, with an equivocal smile.

"It was certainly a pleasant and proud one, sir, as it always must be, to write to a mother in commendation of her son. By the way, Chevalier, you have forgotten to make your compliments to the Count on his promotion——"

"I have not heard of it, Madam; what may it be?" asked Stubber.

"To the command of the Pahlen Hussars, sir; one of the proudest 'charges' of the empire."

A rush of blood to Wahnsdorf's face was as quickly followed by a deadly pallor, and with a broken, faint utterance, he said, "Good-bye," and left the room.

"A fine young fellow—the very picture of a soldier," exclaimed Stubber, looking after him.

"A chevalier of the olden time, sir—the very soul of honor," said the Princess, enthusiastically. "And now for a little gossip with yourself."

It is not "in our brief" to record what passed in that chatty interview; plenty of state secrets and state gossip there was—abundance of that dangerous trifling which mixes up the passions of society with the great game of politics, and makes statecraft feel the impress of men's whims and caprices. We were just beginning at that era the "policy of resentments" which has since pervaded Europe, and the Chevalier and the Princess were sufficiently behind the scene, to have many things to communicate; and here we must leave them while we hasten on to other scenes and other actors.

#### CHAPTER XLIII.

##### DOINGS IN DOWNING-STREET.

THE dull old precincts of Downing-street were more than usually astir. Hackney-coaches and cabs at an early hour, private chariots somewhat later, went to and fro along the dreary pavement, and two cabinet messengers with splashed calèches arrived in hot haste from Dover. Frequent, too, were the messages from the House; a leading oppositionist was then thundering away against the government, inveighing against the



treacherous character of their foreign policy, and indignantly calling on them for certain dispatches to their late envoy at Naples. At every cheer which greeted him from his party a fresh missive would be dispatched from the Treasury benches, and the whisper, at first cautiously muttered, grew louder and louder, "Why does not Upton come down?"

So intricate has been the web of our petty entanglements, so complex the threads of those small intrigues by which we have earned our *soubriquet* of the "perfidious Albion," that it is difficult at this time of day to recall the exact question whose solution, in the words of the orator of the debate, "placed us either at the head of Europe, or consigned us to the fatal mediocrity of a third-rate power." The prophecy, whichever way read, gives us unhappily no clue to the matter in hand, and we are only left to conjecture that it was an intervention in Spain or "something about the Poles." As is usual in such cases, the matter, insignificant enough in itself, was converted into a serious attack on the government, and all the strength of the opposition was arrayed to give power and consistency to the assault. As is equally usual, the cabinet was totally unprepared for defence; either they had altogether undervalued the subject or they trusted to the secrecy with which they had conducted it; whichever of these be the right explanation, each minister could only say to his colleague, "It never came before me; Upton knows all about it."

"And where is Upton?—Why does he not come down?"—were again and again reiterated; while a shower of messages and even mandates invoked his presence.

The last of these was a peremptory note from no less a person than the Premier himself, written in three very significant words, thus, "COME, OR GO;" and given to a trusty whip, the Hon. Gerald Neville, to deliver.

Armed with this not very conciliatory document, the well-practised tactician drew up to the door of the Foreign Office, and demanded to see the Secretary of State.

"Give him this card and this note, sir," said he to the well-dressed and very placid young gentleman who acted as his private secretary.

"Sir Horace is very poorly, sir; he is at this moment in a mineral bath; but as the matter you say is pressing, he will see you. Will you pass this way?"

Mr. Neville followed his guide through an infinity of passages, and at length reached a large folding-door, opening one side of which he was ushered into a spacious apartment, but so thoroughly impregnated with a

thick and offensive vapor, that he could barely perceive, through the mist, the bath in which Upton lay reclined, and the figure of a man, whose look and attitude bespoke the doctor, beside him.

"Ah, my dear fellow," sighed Upton, extending two dripping fingers in salutation; "you have come in at the death. This is the last of it!"

"No, no; don't say that," cried the other, encouragingly. "Have you had any sudden seizure? What is the nature of it?"

"He," said he, looking round to the doctor, "calls it 'arachnoidal trismus,' a thing, he says, that they have all of them ignored for many a day, though Charlemagne died of it. Ah, doctor"—and he addressed a question to him in German.

A growled volley of gutturals ensued, and Upton went on—

"Yes, Charlemagne—Melancthon had it, but lingered for years. It is the peculiar affection of great intellectual natures when afflicted by over-sensibility."

Whether there was that in the manner of the sick man that inspired hope, or something in the aspect of the doctor that suggested distrust, or a mixture of the two together; but certainly Neville rapidly rallied from the fears which had beset him on entering, and in a voice of a more cheery tone, said:

"Come, come, Sir Horace, you'll throw off this as you have done other such attacks. You have never been wanting either to your friends or yourself when the hour of emergency called. We are in such a moment of difficulty now, and you alone can rescue us."

"How cruel of the Duke to write me that!" sighed Upton, as he held up the piece of paper from which the water had obliterated all trace of the words. "It was so inconsiderate—eh, Neville?"

"I'm not aware of the terms he employed," said the other.

This was the very admission that Upton sought to obtain, and in a far more cheery voice he said:

"If I was capable of the effort—if Doctor Geimirstad thought it safe for me to venture—I could set all this to right. These people are all talking 'without book,' Neville—the ever recurring blunder of an opposition when they address themselves to a foreign question; they go upon a newspaper paragraph, or the equally incorrect 'private communication from a friend.' Men in office alone can attain to truth—exact truth—about questions of foreign policy."

"The debate is taking a serious turn, however," interposed Neville. "They reiterate very bold assertions, which none of

our people are in a position to contradict. Their confidence is evidently increasing with the show of confusion in our ranks. Something must be done to meet them, and that quickly."

"Well, I suppose I must go," sighed Upton; and as he held out his wrist to have his pulse felt, he addressed a few words to the doctor.

"He calls it 'a life period,' Neville. He says that he won't answer for the consequences."

The doctor muttered on.

"He adds that the trismus may be thus converted into 'Bi-trismus.' Just imagine that!"

Though this was a stretch of fancy clear and away beyond Neville's apprehension, he began to feel certain misgivings about pushing a request so full of danger; but from this he was in a measure relieved by the tone in which Upton now addressed his valet with directions as to the dress he intended to wear.

"The loose pelisse, with the astracan, Giuseppe, and that vest of 'cramoise' velvet; and if you will just glance at the newspaper, Neville, in the next room, I'll come to you immediately."

The newspapers of the morning after this interview, afford us the speediest mode of completing the incidents, and the concluding sentences of a leading article will be enough to place before our readers what ensued.

"It was at this moment, and amidst the most enthusiastic cheers of the Treasury bench, that Sir Horace Upton entered the house. Leaning on the arm of Mr. Neville, he slowly passed up and took his accustomed place. The traces of severe illness in his features, and the great debility which his gestures displayed, gave an unusual interest to a scene already almost dramatic in its character. For a moment the great chief of opposition was obliged to pause in his assault to let this flood-tide of sympathy pass on, and when at length he did resume, it was plain to see how much the tone of his invective had been tempered by a respect for the actual feeling of the house. The necessity for this act of deference, added to the consciousness that he was in presence of the man whose acts he so strenuously denounced, were too much for the nerves of the orator, and he came to an abrupt conclusion, whose confused and uncertain sentences scarcely warranted the cheers with which his friends rallied him.

"Sir Horace rose at once to reply. His voice was at first so inarticulate that we could but catch the burden of what he said—a request that the house would accord him all the indulgence which his state of debility and suffering called for. If the first few

sentences he uttered imparted a painful significance to the entreaty, it very soon became apparent that he had no occasion to bespeak such indulgence. In a voice that gained strength and fullness as he proceeded, he entered upon what might be called a narrative of the foreign policy of the administration, clearly showing that their course was guided by certain great principles which dictated a line of action firm and undeviating; that the measures of the government, however modified by passing events in Europe, had been uniformly consistent, based upon the faith of treaties, but ever mindful of the growing requirements of the age. Through a narrative of singular complexity he guided himself with consummate skill, and though detailing events which occupied every region of the globe, neither confusion nor inconsistency ever marred the recital, and names and places and dates were quoted by him without any artificial aid to memory."

There was in the polished air and calm dispassionate delivery of the speaker, something which seemed to charm the ears of those who for four hours before had been so mercilessly assailed by all the vituperation and insolence of party animosity. It was, so to say, a period of relief and repose which even antagonists were not insensible to. No man ever understood the advantage of his gifts in this way better than Upton, nor ever was there one who could convert the powers which fascinated society into the means of controlling a popular assembly, with greater assurance of success. He was a man of a strictly logical mind, a close and acute thinker; he was of a highly imaginative temperament, rich in all the resources of a poetic fancy; he was thoroughly well read, and gifted with a ready memory; but above all these—transcendently above them all—he was a "man of the world;" and no one either in parliament or out of it knew so well when it was right to say "the wrong thing." But let us resume our quotation:

"For more than three hours did the house listen with breathless attention, to a narrative which in no parliamentary experience has been surpassed for the lucid clearness of its details, the unbroken flow of its relation. The orator up to this time had strictly devoted himself to explanation; he now proceeded to what might be called reply. If the house was charmed and instructed before, it was now positively astonished and electrified by the overwhelming force of the speaker's raillery and invective. Not satisfied with showing the evil consequences that must ensue from any adoption of the measures recommended by the opposition, he proceeded to exhibit the insufficiency of views always based upon false information.



" 'We have been taunted,' said he, 'with the charge of fomenting discords in foreign lands; we have been arraigned as disturbers of the world's peace, and called the firebrands of Europe; we are exhibited as parading the Continent with a more than Quixotic ardor—since we seek less the redress of wrong than the opportunity to display our own powers of interference—that quality, which the learned gentleman has significantly stigmatized as a spirit of meddling impertinence, offensive to the whole world of civilization. Let me tell him, sir, that the very debate of this night has elicited, and from himself, too, the very outrages he has had the temerity to ascribe to us. His has been this indiscriminate ardor, his, this unjudging rashness, his, this meddling impertinence (I am but quoting, not inventing, a phrase), which, without accurate—without, indeed, any—information, he has ventured to charge the government with what no administration would be guilty of—a cool and deliberate violation of the national law of Europe.

" 'He has told you, sir, that in our eagerness to distinguish ourselves as universal redressers of injury, we have ferreted out—I take his own polished expression—the case of an obscure boy in an obscure corner of Italy, converted a commonplace and very vulgar incident into a tale of interest, and by a series of artful devices and insinuations based upon this narrative a grave and insulting charge upon one of the oldest of our allies. He has alleged that throughout the whole of these proceedings we had not the shadow of pretence for our interference; that the acts imputed occurred in a land over which we had no control, and in the person of an individual in whom we had no interest. That this Sebastiano Greppi—this 'image-boy'—for so with a courteous pleasantry he has called him—was a Neapolitan subject, the affiliated envoy of I know not what number of secret societies; that his sculptural pretensions were but pretexts to conceal his real avocations—the agency of a blood-thirsty faction; that his crime was no less than an act of high treason, and that Austrian gentleness and mercy were never more conspicuously illustrated than in the commutation of a death sentence to one of perpetual imprisonment.

" 'What a rude task is mine, when I must say that for every one of these assertions there is not the slightest foundation in fact. Greppi's offence was not a crime against the state; as little was it committed within the limits of the Austrian territory. He is not the envoy, or even a member, of any revolutionary club; he never—I am speaking with knowledge, sir—he never mingled in

the schemes of plotting politicians; as far removed is he from sympathy with such men, as the genius of a great artist, is he elevated above the humble path to which the learned gentleman's raillery would sentence him. For the character of 'an image-vender,' the learned gentleman must look nearer home; and, lastly, this youth is an Englishman, born of a race and a blood that need feel no shame in comparison with any around me! "

" 'To the loud cry of 'Name, name,' which now arose, Sir Horace replied—'If I do not announce the name at this moment, it is because there are circumstances in the history of the youth to which publicity would give irreparable pain. These are details which I have no right to bring under discussion, and which must inevitably thus become matters of town-talk. To any gentleman of the opposite side who may desire to verify the assertions I have made to the House, I would, under pledge of secrecy, reveal the name. I would do more; I would permit him to confide it to a select number of friends equally pledged with himself. This is surely enough.' "

We have no occasion to continue our quotation further, and we take up our history, as Sir Horace, overwhelmed by the warmest praises and congratulations, drove off from the House to his home. Amid all the excitement and enthusiasm which this brilliant success produced among the ministerialists, there was a kind of dread lest the over-taxed powers of the orator should pay the heavy penalty of such an effort. They had all heard how he came from a sick chamber; they had all seen him, trembling, faint, and almost voiceless as he stole up to his place, and they began to fear lest they had, in the hot zeal of party, imperilled the ablest chief in their ranks.

What a relief to these agonies had it been, could they have seen Upton, as he once more gained the solitude of his chamber, where, divested of all the restraints of an audience, he walked leisurely up and down, smoking a cigar, and occasionally smiling pleasantly as some "conceit" crossed his mind.

Had there been any one to mark him there, it is more than likely that he would have regarded him as a man revelling in the after-thought of a great success—one who, having come gloriously through the combat, was triumphantly recalling to his memory every incident of the fight. How little had they understood Sir Horace Upton who would have read him in this wise! That daring and grasping nature rarely dallied in the past; even the present was scarcely full enough for the craving of a spirit that cried ever "Forward."

What might be made of that night's success—how best should it be turned to account!—these were the thoughts which beset him, and many were the devices which his subtlety hit on to this end. There was not a goal his ambition could point to, but which came associated with some deteriorating ingredient. He was tired of the Continent, he hated England, he shuddered at the Colonies. India, perhaps, said he, hesitatingly—India perhaps might do. To continue as he was—to remain in office, as having reached the topmost rung of the ladder—would have been insupportable indeed; and yet how, without longer service at his post, could any man claim a higher reward?



## CHAPTER XLIV.

## THE SUTLETIES OF STATECRAFT.

It was not till Sir Horace had smoked his third cigar that he seated himself at his writing-table. He then wrote rapidly a brief note, of which he proceeded to make a careful copy. This he folded and placed in an envelope, addressing it to His Grace the Duke of Cloudeslie.

A few minutes afterwards he began to prepare for bed. The day was already breaking, and yet that sick man was unwearied and unwasted—not a trace of fatigue in features, that under the infliction of a tire-some dinner-party would have seemed bereft of hope.

The tied-up knocker—the straw-strewn street—the closely-drawn curtains announced to London the next morning that the distinguished minister was seriously ill; and from an early hour the tide of inquiries, in carriages and on foot, passed silently along that dreary way. High and mighty were the names inscribed in the porter's book; royal dukes had called in person, and never was public solicitude more widely manifested. There is something very flattering in the thought of a great intelligence being damaged and endangered in our service! With all its melancholy influences, there is a feeling of importance suggested by the idea, that for us and our interest a man of commanding powers should have jeopardied his life. There is a very general prejudice, not alone in obtaining the best article for our money, but the most of it also; and this sentiment extends to the individuals employed in the public service; and it is, doubtless, a very consolatory reflection to the tax-paying classes, that the great functionaries of state are not indolent recipients of princely incomes, but hard-worked men of office—up late and early at their duties—prematurely old, and worn out before their time! Something of this same feeling inspires much of the sympathy displayed for a sick statesman—a sentiment not altogether void of a certain misgiving that we have probably over-taxed the energies employed in our behalf.

Scarcely one in a hundred of those who now called and “left their names,” had ever seen Sir Horace Upton in their lives. Few are more removed from public knowledge than the men who fill even the highest places in our diplomacy. He was, therefore, to the mass, a mere name. Since his accession to office little or nothing had been heard of him, and of that little, the greater part was made up of sneering allusions to his habits of indolence; impertinent hints about his caprices and his tastes. Yet now, by a

grand effort in the “house,” and a well-got-up report of a dangerous illness the day after, was he the most marked man in all the state—the theme of solicitude throughout two millions of people!

There was a dash of mystery too in the whole incident, which heightened its flavor for public taste—a vague, indistinct impression—it did not even amount to rumor—was abroad, that Sir Horace had not been fairly treated by his colleagues; either that they could, if they wished it, have defended the cause themselves, or that they had needlessly called him from a sick-bed to come to the rescue, or that some subtle trap had been laid to ensnare him. These were vulgar beliefs, which, if they obtained little credence in the higher region of club-life, were extensively circulated, and not discredited, in less distinguished circles. How they ever got abroad at all—how they found their way into newspaper paragraphs, terrifying timid supporters of the ministry, by the dread prospect of a “smash”—exciting the hopes of opposition with the notion of a great secession—throwing broadcast before the world of readers every species of speculation—all kinds of combination—who knows how all this happened? Who indeed ever knew how things a thousand times more secret ever got wind and became club-talk ere the actors in the events had finished an afternoon's canter in the Park?

If, then, the world of London learned on the morning in question that Sir Horace Upton was very ill, it also surmised—why and wherefore it knows best—that the same Sir Horace was an ill-used man. Now of all the objects of public sympathy and interest, next after a foreign emperor, or a visit at Buckingham Palace, or a newly arrived hippopotamus at the Zoological Gardens, there is nothing your British public is so fond of as an ill-used man. It is essential, however, to his great success, that he be ill-used in high places; that his enemies and calumniators should have been, if not princes, dukes and marquises, and great dignitaries of the state. Let him only be supposed to be martyred by these, and there is no saying where his popularity may be carried. A very general impression is current that the mass of the nation is more or less “ill-used”—denied its natural claims and just rewards. To hit upon, therefore, a good representation of this hard usage; to find a tangible embodiment of this great injustice, is a discovery that is never unappreciated.

To read his speech of the night before, and to peruse the ill-scrawled bulletin of his health at the hall-door in the morning, made up the measure of his popularity, and the world exclaimed, “Think of the man they

have treated in this fashion!" Every one framed the indictment to his own taste; nor was the wrong the less grievous, that none could give it a name. Even cautious men fell into the trap, and were heard to say, "If all we hear be true, Upton has not been fairly treated."

What an air of confirmation to all these rumors did it give, when the evening papers announced in the most striking type—RESIGNATION OF SIR HORACE UPTON. If the terms in which he communicated that step to the premier were not before the world, the date, the very night of the debate, showed that the resolution had been come to previous to his illness.

Some of the journals affected to be in the whole secret of the transaction, and only waiting the opportune moment to announce it to the world. The dark mysterious paragraphs in which journalists showed their no-meanings abounded, and menacing hints were thrown out that the country would no longer submit to—Heaven knows what. There was, besides all this, a very considerable amount of that catechetical inquiry, which, by suggesting a number of improbabilities, hopes to arrive at the likely, and thus, by asking questions where they had a perfect confidence they would never be answered, they seemed to overwhelm their adversaries with shame and discomfiture. The great fact, however, was indisputable—Upton had resigned.

To the many who looked up at the shuttered windows of his sad-looking London house, this reflection occurred naturally enough. How little the poor sufferer, on his sick-bed, cared for the contest that raged around him; how far away were, in all probability, his thoughts from that world of striving and ambition whose waves came even to his doorside. Let us, in that privilege which belongs to us, take a peep within the curtained room, where a bright fire is blazing, and where, seated behind a screen, Sir Horace is now penning a note; a bland half smile rippling his features as some pleasant conceit has flashed across his mind. We have rarely seen him looking so well. The stimulating events of the last few days have done for him more than all the counsels of his doctors, and his eyes are brighter and his cheeks fatter than usual. A small miniature hangs suspended by a narrow ribbon round his neck, and a massive gold bracelet adorns one wrist; "two souvenirs," which he stops to contemplate as he writes, nor is there a touch of sorrowful meaning in the regard to their histories—the look rather seems of the self-complacent glance that a successful general might bestow on the decorations he had won by his valor. It is essentially vainglorious.

More than once has he paused to read over the sentence he has written, and one may see, by the motion of his lips as he reads, how completely he has achieved the sentiment he would express. "Yes, charming princess," said he, purusing the lines before him, "I've once more to throw myself at your feet, and reiterate the assurances of a devotion which has formed the happiness of my existence." "That does not sound quite French after all," muttered he—"better perhaps—has formed the religion of my heart." "I know you will reproach my precipitancy; I feel how your judgment, unerring as it ever is, will condemn what may seem a sudden ebullition of temper; but, I ask, is this amongst the catalogue of my weaknesses? Am I of that clay which is always fissured when heated? No. You know me better—you alone of all the world have the clue to a heart whose affections are all your own. The few explanations of all that has happened must be reserved for our meeting. Of course neither the newspapers nor the reviews have any conception of the truth. Four words will set your heart at ease, and these you must have: 'I have done wisely;' with that assurance you have no more to fear. I mean to leave this in all secrecy by the end of the week. I shall go over to Brussels, where you can address me under the name of Richard Bingham. I shall only remain there to watch events for a day or two, and thence on to Geneva.

"I am quite charmed with your account of poor Lady G—, though as I read, I can detect how all the fascinations you tell of were but reflected glories. Your view of her situation is admirable, and by your skilful tactique it is she herself that ostracises the society that would only have accepted her on sufferance. How true is your remark as to the great question at issue—not her guilt or innocence, but what danger might accrue to others from infractions that incite publicity. The cabinet were discussing to-day a measure by which sales of estated property could be legalized without those tiresome and costly researches into title, which in a country where confiscations were frequent, became at last endless labor. Don't you think that some such measure might be beneficially adopted abroad, as regards female character? Could there not be invented a species of social guarantee, which, rejecting all investigation into by-gones after a certain limit, would confer a valid title that none might dispute?

"Lawyers tell us that no man's property would stand the test of a search for title. Are we quite certain how far the other sex are our betters in this respect, and might it not be wise to interpose a limit beyond which research need not proceed?



"I concur in all you say about G— himself. He was always looking for better security than he needed—a great mistake, whether the investment consist of our affections or our money. Physicians say that if any man could only see the delicate anatomy on which his life depends, and watch the play of those organs that sustain him, he would not have courage to move a step, or utter a loud word. Might we not carry the analogy into morals, and ask, is it safe or prudent in us to investigate too deeply? are we wise in dissecting motives? or would it not be better to enjoy our moral as we do our material health, without seeking to assure ourselves further?"

"Besides all this, the untravelled Englishman, and such was Glencore when he married, never can be brought to understand the harmless levities of foreign life. Like a fresh-water sailor, he always fancies the boat is going to upset, and he throws himself out at the first 'jobble!' I own to you frankly, I never knew the case in question; how far she went is a secret to me. I might have heard the whole story. It required some address in me to escape it, but I do detest these narrations where truth is marred by passion, and all just inferences confused and confounded with vague and absurd suspicions.

"Glencore's conduct throughout was little short of insanity; like a man who hears that his banker is insecure taking refuge in insolvency, he ruins himself to escape embarrassment. They tell me here that the shock has completely deranged his intellect, and that he lives a life of melancholy isolation in that old castle in Ireland.

"How few men in this world can count the cost of their actions, and make up that simple calculation, 'how much shall I have to pay for it?'"

"Take any view one pleases of the case, would it not have been better for him to have remained in the world and of it? Would not its pleasures, even its cares, have proved better 'distractions' than his now brooding thoughts? If a man have a secret ailment, does he parade it in public? Why, then, this exposure of a pain for which there is no sympathy?"

"Life, after all, is only a system of compensations. Wish it to be whatever you please, but accept it as it really is, and make the best of it! For my own part, I have over felt like one who, having got a most disastrous account of a road he was about to travel, is delightfully surprised to find the way better and the inns more comfortable than he looked for. In the main, men and women are very good—our mistake is, expecting to find people always in our own

humor. Now, if one is very rich, this is practical enough, but the mass must be content to encounter disparity of mood and differences of taste at every step. There is, therefore, some tact required in conforming to these 'irregularities,' and unhappily every body has not got tact.

"You, charming Princess, have tact; but you have beauty, wit, fascination, rank—all that can grace high station, and all that high station can reflect upon great natural gifts; that you should see the world through a rose-tinted medium is a very condition of your identity; and there is truth as well as good philosophy in the view! You have often told me that if people were not exactly all that strict moralists might wish, yet that they made up a society very pleasant and liveable withal, and that there was always a floating capital of kindness and good feeling quite sufficient to trade upon, and even grow richer by negotiating!"

"People who live out of the world, or, what comes to the same thing, in a little world of their own, are ever craving after perfectability, just as in their time of peace nations only accept in their armies six-foot grenadiers, and gigantic dragoons. Let the pressure of war or emergency arise, however, or, in other words, let there be the real business of life to be done, then the standard is lowered at once, the battle is fought and won by very inferior agency. Now, show troops and show qualities are very much alike; they are a measure of what would be very charming to arrive at, were it only practicable. O! that poor Glencore had only learned the lesson, instead of writing nonsense verses at Eton!"

"The murky domesticities of England have no correlatives in the sunny enjoyments of Italian life; and John Bull has got to fancy that virtue is only cultivated where there are coal fires, stuff curtains, and a window tax. Why, then, in the name of Doctors' Commons! does he marry a foreigner?"

Just as Upton had written these words, his servant presented him with a visiting card.

"Lord Glencore!" exclaimed he aloud, "when was he here?"

"His lordship is below stairs now, sir. He said he was sure you'd see him."

"Of course, I shall; show him up at once. Wait a moment, give me that cane, place those cushions for my feet, draw the curtain, and leave the aconite and ether drops near me—that will do, thank you;" and Sir Horace smiled that gracious and benevolent smile which usually served to prepare his features to receive visitors.

Some minutes elapsed ere the door was

opened; the slow footfall of one ascending the stairs, step by step, was heard, accompanied by the labored respiration of a man breathing heavily, and then Lord Glencore entered, his form worn and emaciated, and his face pale and colorless. With a feeble uncertain voice he said,

"I knew you'd see me, Upton, and I wouldn't go away!"—and with this he sank into a chair and sighed deeply.

"Of course, my dear Glencore, you knew it," said the other feelingly; for he was shocked by the wretched spectacle before him, "even were I more seriously indisposed than——"

"And were you really ill, Upton?" asked Glencore, with a weakly smile.

"Can you ask the question? Have you not seen the evening papers—read the announcement on my door—seen the troops of inquirers in the streets?"

"Yes," sighed he, wearily, "I have heard and seen all you say, and yet I bethought me of a remark I once heard from the Duke of Orleans, 'Monsieur Upton is a most active minister when his health permits; and when it does not, he is the most mischievous intriguer in Europe.'"

"He was always straining at an anathema; he fancied he could talk like St. Simon, and it really spoiled a very pleasant converser."

"And so you have been very ill," said Glencore, slowly, and as though he had not heeded the last remark, "so have I also!"

"You seem to me too feeble to be about, Glencore," said Upton, kindly.

"I am so, if it were of any consequence—I mean if my life could interest or benefit any one. My head, however, will bear solitude no longer; I must have some one to talk to; I mean to travel; I will leave this in a day or so."

"Come along with me, then; my plan is to make for Brussels, but it must not be spoken of, as I want to watch events there before I remove farther from England."

"So it is all true, then; you have resigned?" said Glencore.

"Perfectly true."

"What a strange step to take. I remember full fifteen years ago you're telling me that you'd rather be Foreign Secretary of England than the monarch of any third-rate Continental kingdom."

"I thought so then, and, what is more singular, I think so still."

"And you throw it up at the very moment people are proclaiming your success!"

"You shall hear all my reasons, Glencore, for this resolution, and will, I feel assured, approve of them; but they'd only weary you now."

"Let me know them now, Upton; it is such a relief to me when, even by a momentary interest in any thing, I am able to withdraw this poor tired brain from its now distressing thoughts." He spoke these words not only with strong feeling, but even imparted to them a tone of entreaty, so that Upton could not but comply.

"When I wished for the Secretaryship, my dear Glencore," said he, "I fancied the office as it used to be in olden times, when one played the great game of diplomacy, with kings and ministers for antagonists, and the world at large for spectators; when consummate skill and perfect secrecy were objects of moment, and when grand combinations rewarded one's labor with all the certainty of a mathematical problem. Every move on the board could be calculated beforehand, no disturbing influences could derange plans that never were divulged till they were accomplished. All that is past and gone; our Constitution, grown every day more and more democratic, rules by the House of Commons. Questions, whose treatment demanded all the skill of a statesman, and all the address of a man of the world, come to be discussed in open Parliament; correspondence is called for, dispatches and even private notes are produced, and, while the State you are opposed to revels in the security of secrecy, your whole game is revealed to the world in the shape of a Blue Book.

"Nor is this all—the debaters on these nice and intricate questions, involving the most far-reaching speculation of statesmanship, are men of cotton and corn, who view every international difficulty only in its relation to their peculiar interests. National greatness, honor, and security are nothing—the maintenance of that equipoise which preserves peace is nothing—the nice management which, by the exhibition of courtesy here, or of force there, is nothing compared to alliances that secure us ample supplies of raw material, and abundant markets for manufactures. Diplomacy has come to this!"

"But you must have known all this before you accepted office; you had seen where the course of events led to, and were aware that the House ruled the country?"

"Perhaps I did not recognize the fact to its full extent. Perhaps I fancied I could succeed in modifying the system," said Upton, cautiously.

"A hopeless undertaking!" said Glencore.

"I'm not quite so certain of that," said Upton, pausing for a while as he seemed to reflect. When he resumed, it was in a lighter and more flippant tone—"To make



short of it, I saw that I could not keep office on these conditions, but I did not choose to go out as a beaten man. For my pride's sake I desired that my reasons should be reserved for myself alone—for my actual benefit it was necessary that I should have a hold over my colleagues in office. These two conclusions were rather difficult to combine, but I accomplished them.

"I had interested the King so much in my views as to what the Foreign-office ought to be that an interchange of letters took place, and his Majesty imparted to me his fullest confidence in disparagement of the present system. This correspondence was a perfect secret to the whole Cabinet, but when it had arrived at a most confidential crisis, I suggested to the king that Cloudeslie should be consulted. I knew well that this would set the match to the train. No sooner did Cloudeslie learn that such a correspondence had been carried on for months without his knowledge, views stated, plans promulgated, and the King's pleasure taken on questions not one of which should have been broached without his approval and concurrence, than he declared he would not hold the seals of office another hour. The King, well knowing his temper, and aware what a terrific exposure might come of it, sent for me and asked what was to be done. I immediately suggested my own resignation, a sacrifice to the difficulty and to the wounded feelings of the duke. Thus did I achieve what I sought for. I imposed a heavy obligation on the King and the premier, and I have secured secrecy as to my motives which none will ever betray.

"I only remained for the debate of the other night, for I wanted a little public enthusiasm to mark the fall of the curtain."

"So that you still hold them as your debtors?" asked Glencore.

"Without doubt, I do; my claim is a heavy one."

"And what would satisfy it?"

"If my health would stand England," said Upton, leisurely, "I'd take a peerage; but as this murky atmosphere would suffocate me, and as I don't care for the letter without the political privileges, I have determined to have the 'garter.'"

"The garter, a blue ribbon," exclaimed Glencore, as though the insufferable coolness with which the pretension was announced might justify any show of astonishment.

"Yes; I had some thoughts of India, but the journey deters me; in fact, I'd as soon enjoy the paltry pension of my diplomatic services quietly, and devote the remainder of my days to rest, and the care of this shattered constitution." It is impossible to convey to the reader the tender and affec-

tionate compassion with which Sir Horace seemed to address these last words to himself.

"Do you ever look upon yourself as the luckiest fellow in Europe, Upton?" asked Glencore.

"No," sighed he; "I occasionally fancy I have been hardly dealt with by fortune. I have only to throw my eyes around me, and see a score of men, richer and more elevated than myself, not one of whom has capacity for even a third-rate task, so that really the self-gratulation you speak of has not occurred to me."

"But, after all, you have had a most successful career—"

"Look at the matter this way, Glencore; there are about six—say six men in all Europe—who have a little more common sense than all the rest of the world—I am one of them!" If there was a supreme boastfulness in the speech, the modest delivery of it completely mystified the hearer, and he sat gazing with wonderment at the man before him.

## CHAPTER XLV.

## SOME SAD REVERIES.

"HAVE you any plans, Glencore?" asked Upton, as they posted along towards Dover.

"None," was the brief reply.

"Nor any destination you desire to reach?"

"Just as little."

"Such a state as yours, then, I take it, is about the best thing going in life. Every move one makes is attended with so many adverse considerations—every goal so separated from us by unforeseen difficulties, that an existence, even without what is called an object, has certain great advantages."

"I am curious to hear them," said the other, half cynically.

"For myself," said Upton, not accepting the challenge, "the brief intervals of comparative happiness I have enjoyed have been in periods when complete repose, almost torpor, has surrounded me, and when the mere existence of the day has engaged my thoughts."

"What became of memory all this while?"

"Memory!" said Upton, laughing, "I hold my memory in proper subjection. It no more dares obtrude upon me uncalled-for, than would my valet come into my room till I ring for him. Of the slavery men endure from their own faculties I have no experience."

"And, of course, no sympathy for them."

"I will not say that I cannot compassionate sufferings though I have not felt them."

"Are you quite sure of that?" asked Glencore, almost sternly. "Is not your very pity a kind of contemptuous sentiment towards those who sorrow without reason—the strong man's estimate of the weak man's sufferings? Believe me, there is no true condolence where there is not the same experience of woe!"

"I should be sorry to lay down so narrow a limit to fellow-feeling," said Upton.

"You told me a few moments back," said Glencore, "that your memory was your slave. How, then, can you feel for one like me, whose memory is his master? How understand a path that never wanders out of the shadow of the past?"

There was such an accent of sorrow impressed upon these words, that Upton did not desire to prolong a discussion so painful; and thus, for the remainder of the way, little was interchanged between them. They crossed the strait by night, and as Upton stole upon deck after dusk, he found Glencore seated near the wheel, gazing intently at the lights on shore from which they were fast receding.

"I am taking my last look at England, Upton," said he, affecting a tone of easy indifference.

"You surely mean to go back again one of these days?" said Upton.

"Never, never!" said he, solemnly. "I have made all my arrangements for the future—every disposition regarding my property—I have neglected nothing, so far as I know, of those claims which, in the shape of relationship, the world has such reverence for; and now I bethink me of myself. I shall have to consult you, however, about this boy," said he, faltering in the words. "The objection I once entertained to his bearing my name exists no longer, he may call himself Massy, if he will. The chances are," added he, in a lower and more feeling voice, "that he rejects a name that will only remind him of a wrong!"

"My dear Glencore," said Upton, with real tenderness, "do I apprehend you aright? Are you, at last, convinced that you have been unjust? Has the moment come in which your better judgment rises above the evil counsels of prejudice and passion—?"

"Do you mean, am I assured of her innocence?" broke in Glencore, wildly. "Do you imagine, if I were so, that I could withhold my hand from taking a life so infamous and dishonored as mine! The world would have no parallel for such a wretch! Mark me! Upton," cried he, fiercely, "there is no torture I have yet endured would equal the bare possibility of what you hint at."

"Good Heavens! Glencore, do not let me

suppose that selfishness has so marred and disfigured your nature that this is true! Bethink you of what you say—would it not be the crowning glory of your life to repair a dreadful wrong, and acknowledge before the world that the fame you had aspersed was without stain or spot?"

"And with what grace should I ask the world to believe me? Is it when expiating the shame of a falsehood, that I should call upon men to accept me as truthful? Have I not proclaimed her, from one end of Europe to the other, dishonored? If *she* be absolved, what becomes of *me*?"

"This is unworthy of you, Glencore," said Upton, severely; "nor, if illness and long suffering had not impaired your judgment, had you ever spoken such words. I say once more, that if the day came that you could declare to the world that her fame had no other reproach than the injustice of your own unfounded jealousy, that day would be the best and the proudest of your life."

"The proud day that published me a calumniator of all that I was most pledged to defend—the deliberate liar against the obligation of the holiest of all contracts! You forget, Upton—but I do not forget—that it was by this very argument you once tried to dissuade me from my act of vengeance. You told me, ay, in words that still ring in my ears, to remember that if by any accident or chance her innocence might be proven, that I could never avail myself of the vindication without first declaring my own unworthiness to profit by it—that if the wife stood forth in all the pride of purity, the husband would be a scoff and a shame throughout the world!"

"When I said so," said Upton, "it was to turn you from a path that could not but lead to ruin; I endeavored to deter you by an appeal that interested even your selfishness."

"Your subtlety has outwitted itself, Upton," said Glencore, with a bitter irony; "it is not the first instance on record where blank cartridge has proved fatal!"

"One thing is perfectly clear," said Upton, boldly, "the man who shrinks from the repair of a wrong he has done, on the consideration of how it would affect himself and his own interests, shows that he cares more for the outward show of honor, than its real and sustaining power."

"And will you tell me, Upton, that the world's estimate of a man's fame is not essential to his self-esteem, or that there yet lived one who could brave obloquy without, by the force of something within him?"

"This I will tell you," replied Upton, "that he who balances between the two is



scarcely an honest man; and that he who accepts the show for the substance is not a wise one."

"These are marvellous sentiments to hear from one whose craft has risen to a proverb, and whose address in life is believed to be not his meanest gift."

"I accept the irony in all good humor; I go further, Glencore, I stoop to explain. When any one in the great and eventful journey of life seeks to guide himself safely, he has to weigh all the considerations, and calculate all the combinations adverse to him. The straight road is rarely, or never, possible; even if events were, which they are not, easy to read, they must be taken in combination with others, and with their consequences. The path of action becomes necessarily devious and winding, and compromises are called for at every step. It is not in the moment of shipwreck that a man stops to inquire into petty details of the articles he throws into the long-boat; he is bent on saving himself as best he can. He seizes what is next him, if it suit his purpose. Now were he to act in this manner in all the quiet security of his life on shore, his conduct would be highly blameable. No emergency would warrant his taking what belonged to another—no critical moment would drive him to the instinct of self-preservation. Just the same is the interval between action and reflection. Give me time and forethought, and I will employ something better and higher than craft. My subtlety, as you like to call it, is not my best weapon; I only use it in emergency."

"I read the matter differently," said Glencore, sulkily; "I could, perhaps, offer another explanation of your practice."

"Pray, let me hear it; we are in all confidence here, and I promise you I will not take badly whatever you say to me."

Glencore sat silent and motionless.

"Come, shall I say it for you, Glencore? for I think I know what is passing in your mind."

The other nodded, and he went on.

"You tell me, in plain words, that I keep my craft for myself; my high principle for my friends."

Glencore only smiled, but Upton continued:

"So, then, I have guessed aright; and the very worst you can allege against this course is, that what I bestow is better than what I retain!"

"One of Solomon's proverbs may be better than a shilling; but which would a hungry man rather have? I want no word-fencing, Upton, still less do I seek what might sow distrust between us. This much, however, has life taught me—the great trials

of this world are like its great maladies, Providence has meant them to be fatal; we call in the doctor in the one case, or the counsellor in the other, out of habit rather than out of hope. Our own consciousness has already whispered that nothing can be of use, but we like to do as our neighbors, and so we take remedies and follow injunctions to the last. The wise man quickly detects, by the character of the means, how emergent is the case believed to be, and rightly judges that recourse to violent measures implies the presence of great peril. If he be really wise, then he desists at once from what can only torture his few remaining hours. They can be given to better things than the agonies of such agency. To this exact point has my case come, and by the counsels you have given me do I tread my danger! Your only remedy is as bad as the malady it is meant to cure! I cannot take it!"

"Accepting your own imagery; I would say," said Upton, "that you are one who will not submit to an operation of some pain that he might be cured."

Glencore sat moodily for some moments without speaking; at last he said, "I feel as though continual change of place and scene would be a relief to me. Let us rendezvous, therefore, somewhere for the autumn, and meanwhile I'll wander about alone."

"What direction do you purpose to take?"

"The Schwartz Wald and the Höhlenthal, first. I want to revisit a place I knew in happier days. Memory must surely have something besides sorrows to render us. I owned a little cottage there once, near Steig. I fished and read Uhländ for a summer long. I wonder if I could resume the same life. I knew the whole village—the blacksmith, the schoolmaster, the dorf-richter—all of them. Good, kind souls they were—how they wept when we parted! Nothing consoled them but my having purchased the cottage, and promised to come back again!"

Upton was glad to accept even this much of interest in the events of life, and drew Glencore on to talk of the days he had passed in this solitary region.

As in the dreariest landscape a ray of sunlight will reveal some beautiful effects, making the eddies of the dark pool to glitter, lighting up the russet moss, and giving to the half-dried lichen a tinge of bright color, so will, occasionally, memory throw over a life of sorrow, a gleam of happier meaning. Faces and events, forms and accents, that once found their way to our hearts, come back again, faintly and imperfectly it may be, but with a touch that revives in us what we once were. It is the one sole feature in

which self-love becomes amiable, when, looking back on our past, we cherish the thought of a time before the world had made us sceptical and hard-hearted!

Glencore warmed as he told of that tranquil period when poetry gave a color to his life, and the wild conceptions of genius ran like a thread of gold through the whole web of existence. He quoted passages that had struck him for their beauty or their truthfulness; he told how he had tried to allure his own mind to the tone that vibrated in "the magic music of verse," and how the very attempt had inspired him with gentler thoughts, a softer charity, and a more tender benevolence towards his fellows.

"Tieck is right, Upton, when he says there are two natures in us, distinct and apart—one, the imaginative and ideal; the other, the actual and the sensual. Many shake them together and confound them, making of the incongruous mixture that vile compound of inconsistency, where the beautiful and the true are ever warring with the deformed and the false; their lives a long struggle with themselves, a perpetual contest between high hope and base enjoyment. A few keep them apart, retaining, through their worldliness, some hallowed spot in the heart, where ignoble desires and mean aspirations have never dared to come. A fewer still have made the active work of life subordinate to the guiding spirit of purity, adventuring on no road unsanctioned by high and holy thoughts, caring for no ambitions but such as make us nobler and better!

"I once had a thought of such life; and even the memory of it, like the prayers we have learned in our childhood, has a hallowing influence over after years. If that poor boy, Upton," and his lips trembled on the words, "If that poor boy could have been brought up thus humbly! If he had been taught to know no more than an existence of such simplicity called for, what a load of care might it have spared *his* heart and *mine*!"

"You have read over those letters I gave you about him?" asked Upton, who eagerly availed himself of the opportunity to approach an almost forbidden theme.

"I have read them over and over," said Glencore, sadly; "in all the mention of him I read the faults of my own nature,—a stubborn spirit of pride that hardens as much as elevates, a resentful temper too prone to give way to its own impulses, an over confidence in himself, too, always ready to revenge its defeats on the world about him. These are his defects, and they are mine. Poor fellow, that he should inherit all that I have of bad, and yet not be

heir to the accidents of fortune which make others so lenient to faults!"

If Upton heard these words with much interest, no less was he struck by the fact that Glencore made no inquiry whatever as to the youth's fate. The last letter of the packet revealed the story of an eventful duel and the boy's escape from Massa by night, with his subsequent arrest by the police; and yet in the face of incidents like these he continued to speculate on traits of mind and character, nor even adverted to the more closely-touching events of his fate. By many an artful hint and ingenious device did Sir Horace try to tempt him to some show of curiosity, but all were fruitless. Glencore would talk freely and willingly of the boy's disposition and his capacity; he would even speculate on the successes and failures such a temperament might meet with in life; but still he spoke as men might speak of a character in a fiction, ingeniously weighing casualties and discussing chances; never, even by accident, approaching the actual story of his life, or seeming to attach any interest to his destiny.

Upton's shrewd intelligence quickly told him that this reserve was not accidental, and he deliberated within himself how far it were safe to invade it.

At length he resumed the attempt, by adroitly alluding to the spirited resistance the boy had made to his capture, and the consequences one might naturally enough ascribe to a proud and high-hearted youth thus tyrannically punished. "I have heard something," said Upton, "of the severities practised at Kuffstein, and they recall the horrible tales of the Inquisition. The terrible contrivances to extort confessions—expedients that often break down the intellect whose secrets they would discover, so that one actually shudders at the name of a spot so associated with evil."

Glencore placed his hands over his face, but did not utter a word; and again Upton went on urging, by every device he could think of, some indication that might mean interest if not anxiety, when suddenly he felt Glencore's hand grasp his arm with violence. "No more of this, Upton," cried he, sternly; "you do not know the torture you are giving me." There was a long and painful pause between them, at the end of which Glencore spoke, but it was in a voice scarcely above a whisper, and every accent of which trembled with emotion. "You remember one sad and memorable night, Upton, in that old castle in Ireland—the night when I came to the resolution of this vengeance!—I sent for the boy to my room; we were alone there together, face to face. It was such a scene as could baffle no wit.



ness, nor dare I now recall its details as they occurred. He came in frankly and boldly, as he felt he had a right to. How he left that room—cowed, abashed, and degraded—I have yet before me. Our meeting did not exceed many minutes in duration—neither of us could have endured it longer. Brief as it was, we ratified a compact between us—it was this, neither was ever to question or inquire after the other—as no tie should unite, no interest should bind us. Had you seen him then, Upton," cried Glencore, wildly; "the proud disdain with which he listened to my attempts at excuse, the haughty distance with which he seemed to reject every thought of complaint, the stern coldness with which he heard me plan out his future, you would have said that some curse had fallen upon my heart, or it could never have been dead to traits which proclaimed him to be my own. In that moment it was my lot to be like him who held out his own right hand to be first burned ere he gave his body to the flames.

"We parted without an embrace—not even a farewell was spoken between us. While I gloried in his pride, had he but yielded ever so little, had one syllable of weakness, one tear escaped him, I had given up my project, reversed all my planned vengeance, and taken him to my heart as my own. But no! He was resolved on proving by his nature that he was of that stern race from which, by a falsehood, I was about to exclude him. It was as though my own blood hurled a proud defiance to me.

"As he walked slowly to the door, his glove fell from his hand. I stealthily caught it up. I wanted to keep it as a memorial of that bitter hour; but he turned hastily around and plucked it from my hand. The action was even a rude one; and with a mocking smile, as though he read my meaning and despised it, he departed.

"You now have heard the last secret of my heart in this sad history. Let us speak of it no more;" and with this Glencore arose and left the deck.

## CHAPTER XLVI.

## THE FLOOD IN THE MAGRA.

WHEN it rains in Italy it does so with a passionate ardor that bespeaks an unusual pleasure. It is no "soft dissolving in tears," but a perfect outburst of woe—wailing in accents the very wildest, and deluging the land in torrents. Mountain streams that were rivulets in the morning, before noon arrives are great rivers, swollen and turbid, carrying away massive rocks from their foundations, and tearing up large trees by the roots. The dried-up stony bed, you have crossed a couple of hours back with un-

wetted feet, is now the course of a stream that would defy the boldest.

These sudden changes are remarkably frequent along that beautiful tract between Nice and Massa, and which is known as the "Riviera di Levante." The rivers, fed from innumerable streams that pour down from the Appenines, are almost instantaneously swollen; and, as their bed continually slopes towards the sea, the course of the waters is one of headlong velocity. Of these the most dangerous by far is the Magra. The river, which even in dry seasons is a considerable stream, becomes, when fed by its tributaries, a very formidable body of water, stretching full a mile in width, and occasionally spreading a vast sheet of foam close to the very outskirts of Sarzana. The passage of the river is all the more dangerous at these periods, as it approaches the sea, and more than one instance is recorded where the stout raft, devoted to the use of travellers, has been carried away to the ocean.

Where the great post-road for Genoa to the south passes, a miserable shealing stands, half hidden in tall osiers, and surrounded with a sedgy swampy soil the foot sinks in at every step. This is the shelter of the boatmen who navigate the raft, and who, in relays by day and night, are in waiting for the service of travellers. In the dreary days of winter, or in the drearier nights, it is scarcely possible to imagine a more hopeless spot; deep in the midst of a low marshy tract, the especial home of tertian fever, with the wild stream roaring at the very door-sill, and the thunder of the angry ocean near, it is indeed all that one can picture of desolation and wretchedness. Nor do the living features of the scene relieve its gloomy influence. Though strong men, and many of them in the prime of life, premature age and decay seem to have settled down upon them. Their lustreless eyes and leaden lips tell of ague, and their sad thoughtful faces bespeak those who are often called upon to meet peril, and who are destined to lives of emergency and hazard.

It was in the low and miserable hut we speak of, just as night set in of a raw November, that four of these raftsmen sat at their smoky fire, in company with two travellers on foot, whose humble means compelled them to await the arrival of some one rich enough to hire the raft. Meantly clad and way-worn were the strangers who now sat endeavoring to dry their dripping clothes at the blaze, and conversing in a low tone together. If the elder, dressed in a russet-colored blouse and a broad-leaved hat, his face almost hid in beard and mustaches, seemed by his short and almost grotesque

figure a travelling showman, the appearance of the younger, despite all the poverty of his dress, implied a very different class.

He was tall and well knit, with a loose activity in all his gestures, which almost invariably characterizes the Englishman; and though his dark hair and his bronzed cheek gave him something of a foreign look, there was a calm, cold self-possession in his air that denoted the Anglo-Saxon. He sat smoking his cigar, his head resting on one hand, and evidently listening with attention to the words of his companion. The conversation that passed will save us the trouble of introducing them to our reader, if he have not already guessed them.

"If we don't wait," said the elder, "till somebody richer and better off than ourselves comes, we'll have to pay seven francs for passin' in such a night as this."

"It is a downright robbery to ask so much," cried the other, angrily. "What so great danger is there? Or what so great hardship, after all?"

"There is both one and the other, I believe," replied he, in a tone evidently meant to moderate his passion; "and just look at the poor craytures that has to do it. They're as weak as a bit of wet paper, they haven't strength to make themselves heard when they talk out there beside the river."

"That fellow yonder," said the youth, "has got good brawny arms and sinewy legs of his own."

"Ay, and he is starved after all. A cut of rye bread and an onion won't keep the heart up, nor a jug of red vinegar, though ye call it grape juice. On my conscience I'm thinkin' that the only people that preserves their strength upon nothin' is the Irish. I used to carry the bags over Slieb-na-boregan mountain and the Turk's Causeway, on wet potatoes and buttermilk, and never a day late for eleven years."

"What a life!" cried the youth, in an accent of utter pity.

"Faix, it was an elegant life—that is, when the weather was any ways good. With a bright sun shinin' and a fine fresh breeze blowin' the white clouds away over the Atlantic, my road was a right cheery one, and I went along inventin' stories, sometimes fairy tales, sometimes makin' rhymes to myself, but always happy and contented. There wasn't a bit of the way I hadn't a name for in my own mind, either some place I read about or some scene in a story of my own; but better than all, there was a dog—a poor starved lurcher he was—with a bit of the tail cut off, he used to meet me, as regular as the clock, on the side of Currah-na-geelah, and come beside me down to the ford every day in the year. No temptation nor

flattery would bring him a step farther. I spent three quarters of a hour once tryin' it, but to no good; he took leave of me on the bank of the river, and went away back with his head down, as if he was grieving over something. Wasn't that mighty curious?"

"Perhaps, like ourselves, Billy, he wasn't quite sure of his passport," said the other, drily.

"Faix, may be so," replied he, with perfect seriousness. "My notion was that he was a kind of an outlaw, a chap that may be bit a child of the family, or ate a lamb of a flock given to him to guard; but, indeed, his general appearance and behavior wasn't like that; he had good manners, and, starved as he was, he never snapped the bread out of my fingers, but took it gently, though his eyes was dartin' out of his head with eagerness all the while."

"A great test of good breeding, truly," said the youth, sadly. "It must be more than a mere varnish when it stands the hard rubs of life in this wise."

"'Tis the very notion occurred to myself. It was the drop of good blood in him made him what he was."

Stealthy and fleeting as was the look that accompanied these words, the youth saw it and blushed to the very top of his forehead.

"The night grows milder," said he, to relieve the awkwardness of the moment by any remark.

"It's a mighty grand sight out there now," replied the other; "there's three miles if there's an inch of white foam dashing down to the sea, that breaks over the bar with a crash like thunder; big trees are sweepin' past, and pieces of vine trellises, and a piece of a small wheel, all carried off just like twigs on a stream."

"Would money tempt those fellows, I wonder, on such a night as this, to venture out?"

"To be sure, and why not? The daily fight poverty maintains with existence dulls the sense of every danger but what comes of want. Don't I know it myself? The poor man has no inimy but hunger; for, ye see, the other vexations and troubles of life, there's always a way of getting round them. You can chate even grief, and you can slip away from danger, but there's no circumventin' an empty stomach."

"What a tyrant is then your rich man!" sighed the youth, heavily.

"That he is. 'Dives Honoratus. Pulcher rex denique regum. You may do as ye please if ye'r rich as a Begum.'"

"A free translation, rather, Billy," said the other, laughing.

"Or ye might render it this way," said Billy:



"If ye've money enough and to spare in the bank,

The world will give ye both beauty and rank."

"And I've nothing to say agin it," continued he. "The raal stimulus to industry in life is to make wealth powerful. Gettin' and heapin' up money for money's sake is a debasin' kind of thing; but makin' a fortune, in order that you may extind your influence, and mowld the distinie of others—that's grand!"

"And see what comes of it!" cried the youth, bitterly. "Mark the base and unworthy subserviency it leads to—see the race of sycophants it begets."

"I have you there, too," cried Billy, with all the exultation of a ready debater. "Them dirty varmint ye speak of is the very test of the truth I'm tellin' ye. 'Tis because they won't labor—because they won't work—that they are driven to acts of sycophancy and meanness. The spirit of industry saves a man even the excuse of doin' any thing low."

"And how often, from your own lips, have I listened to praises at your poor, humble condition; rejoicings that your lot in life secured you against the cares of wealth and grandeur!"

"And you will again, plaze God! if I live, and *you* presave your hearin'. What would I be if I was rich, but an ould—an ould voluptuary?" said Billy, with great emphasis on a word he had some trouble in discovering. "Atin' myself sick with delicacies and drinkin' cordials all day long. How would I know the uses of wealth? Like all other vulgar creatures, I'd be buyin' with my money the respect that I ought to be buyin' with my qualities. It's the very same thing you see in a fair or a market—the country girls goin' about, hobbled and crippled with shoes on, that, if they had bare feet, could walk as straight as a rush. Poverty is not ungraceful itself. It's tryin' to be what isn't natural spoils people entirely!"

"I think I hear voices without. Listen!" cried the youth.

"It's only the river,—it's risin' every minute."

"No, that was a shout. I heard it distinctly. Ay, the boatmen hear it now!"

"It is a travelling-carriage. I see the lamps!" cried one of the men, as he stood at the door and looked landward. "They may as well keep the road—there's no crossin' the Magra to-night!"

By this time the postilions' whips commenced that chorus of cracking by which they are accustomed to announce all arrivals of importance.

"Tell them to go back, Beppo," said the

chief of the raftsmen to one of his party. "If we might try to cross with the mailbags in a boat, there's not one of us would attempt the passage on the raft."

To judge from the increased noise and uproar, the travellers' impatience had now reached its highest point; but to this a slight lull succeeded, probably occasioned by the parley with the boatmen.

"They'll give us five Napoleons for the job," said Beppo, entering, and addressing his chief.

"Per Dio, that won't support our families if we leave them fatherless," muttered the other. "Who and what are they that can't wait till morning?"

"Who knows?" said Beppo, with a genuine shrug of the native indifference. "Princes, be-like!"

"Princes or beggars, we all have lives to save!" mumbled out an old man, as he re-seated himself by the fire. Meanwhile the courier had entered the hut, and was in earnest negotiation with the chief, who, however, showed no disposition to run the hazard of the attempt.

"Are you all cowards alike?" said the courier, in all the insolence of his privileged order; "or is it a young fellow of *your* stamp that shrinks from the risk of a wet jacket?"

This speech was addressed to the youth, whom he had mistaken for one of the raftsmen.

"Keep your coarse speeches for those who will bear them, my good fellow," said the other, boldly, "or mayhap the first wet jacket here will be one with gold lace on the collar."

"He's not one of us; he's a traveller," quickly interposed the chief, who saw that an angry scene was brewing. "He's only waiting to cross the river," muttered he in a whisper, "when some one comes rich enough to hire the raft."

"Sacre bleu! Then he sha'n't comewith us! that I'll promise him," said the courier, whose offended dignity roused all his ire. "Now, once for all, my men, will you earn a dozen Napoleons or not? Here they are for you, if you land us safely at the other side; and never were you so well paid in your lives for an hour's labor."

The sight of the gold, as it glistened temptingly in his outstretched hand, appealed to their hearts far more eloquently than all his words, and they gathered in a group together to hold counsel.

"And you—are you also a distinguished stranger?" said the courier, addressing Billy, who sat warming his hands by the embers of the fire.

"Look you, my man," cried the youth,

"all the gold in your master's leathern bag there can give you no claim to insult those who have offered you no offence. It is enough that you know we do not belong to the raft; so suffer us to escape your notice."

"Sacristi!" exclaimed the courier, in a tone of insolent mockery; "I have travelled the road long enough to learn that one does not need an introduction before addressing a vagabond."

"Vagabond!" cried the youth, furiously, and he sprang at the other with the bound of a tiger. The courier quickly parried the blow aimed at him, and, closely grappled, they both now reeled out of the hut, in terrible conflict. With that terror of the knife that figures in all Italian quarrels, the boatmen did not dare to interfere, but looked on, as, wrestling with all their might, the combatants struggled, each endeavoring to push the other towards the stream. Billy, too, restrained by force, could not come to the rescue, and could only by words, screamed out in all the wildness of his agony, encourage his companion. "Drop on your knee—catch him by the legs—throw him back—back into the stream. That's it—that's it! Good luck to ye," shouted he, madly, as he fought like a lion with those about him. Slipping in the slimy soil, they had both now come to their knees; and after a struggle of some minutes duration, rolled, clasped in each other's fierce embrace, down the slope, into the river. A splash, and a cry half smothered, were heard, and all was over.

While some threw themselves on the frantic creature, whose agony now overtopped his reason, and who fought to get free with the furious rage of despair, others seizing lanterns and torches hurried along the bank of the torrent to try and rescue the combatants. A sudden winding of the river at the place gave little hope to the search, and it was all but certain that the current must already have swept them down far beyond any chance of succor. Assisted by the servants of the traveller, who speedily were apprised of the disaster, the search was continued for hours, and morning at length began to break over the dreary scene without one ray of hope. By the gray cold dawn, the yellow flood could be seen for a considerable distance, and the banks, too, over which a gauzy mist was hanging; but not a living thing was there! The wild torrent swept along its murky course with a deep monotonous roar. Trunks of trees and leafy branches rose and sunk in the wavy flood, but nothing suggested the vaguest hope that either had escaped. The traveller's carriage returned to Spezzia, and Billy, now bereft of reason, was conveyed to the

same place, fast tied with cords, to restrain him from a violence that threatened his own life and that of any near him.

In the evening of that day a peasant's car arrived at Spezzia, conveying the almost lifeless courier, who had been found on the river's bank, near the mouth of the Magra. How he had reached the spot, or what had become of his antagonist, he knew not. Indeed, the fever which soon set in placed him beyond the limits of all questioning, and his incoherent cries and ravings only betrayed the terrible agonies his mind must have passed through.

If this tragic incident, heightened by the actual presence of two of the actors—one all but dead, the other dying—engaged the entire interest and sympathy of the little town, the authorities were actively employed in investigating the event, and ascertaining, so far as they could, to which side the chief blame inclined.

The raftsmen had all been arrested, and they were examined carefully, one by one; and now it only remained to obtain from the traveller himself whatever information he could contribute to throw light on the affair.

His passport, showing that he was an English peer, obtained for him all the deference and respect foreign officials are accustomed to render to that title; and the Prefect announced that, if it suited his convenience, he would wait on his lordship at his hotel to receive his deposition.

"I have nothing to depose—no information to give"—was the dry and not over-courteous response; but as the visit, it was intimated, was indispensable, he named his hour to admit him.

The bland and polite tone of the Prefect was met by a manner of cold but well-bred ease, which seemed to imply that the traveller only regarded the incident in the light of an unpleasant interruption to his journey, but in which he took no other interest. Even the hints thrown out that he ought to consider himself aggrieved and his dignity insulted, produced no effect upon him.

"It was my intention to have halted a few days at Massa, and I could have obtained another courier in the interval," was the cool commentary he bestowed on the incident.

"But your lordship would surely desire investigation. A man is missing; a great crime may have been committed——"

"Excuse my interrupting; but as I am not, nor can be supposed to be, the criminal—nor do I feel myself the victim—while I have not a claim to the character of witness, you would only harass me with interrogatories I could not answer, and excite me to



take interest, or at least bestow attention, on what could concern me."

"Yet there are circumstances in this case which give it the character of a preconcerted plan," said the Prefect thoughtfully.

"Perhaps so," said the other, in a tone of utter indifference.

"Certainly the companion of the man who is missing, and of whom no clue can be discovered, is reported to have uttered your name repeatedly in his ravings."

"My name—how so?" cried the stranger, hurriedly.

"Yes, my lord, the name of your passport—Lord Glencore. Two of those I have placed to watch beside his bed have repeated the same story, and told how he has never ceased to mutter the word to himself in his wanderings."

"Is this a mere fancy?" said the stranger, over whose sickly features a flush now mantled. "Can I see him?"

"Of course. He is in the hospital, and too ill to be removed; but if you will visit him there I will accompany you."

It was only when a call was made upon Lord Glencore for some bodily exertion, that his extreme debility became apparent. Seated at ease in a chair, his manner seemed merely that of natural coldness and apathy; he spoke as one who would not suffer his nature to be ruffled by any avoidable annoyance; but now, as he arose from his seat, and endeavored to walk, one side betrayed

unmistakable signs of palsy, and his general frame exhibited the last stage of weakness.

"You see, sir, that the exertion costs its price," said he, with a sad, sickly smile. "I am the wreck of what once was a man noted for his strength."

The other muttered some words of comfort and compassion, and they descended the stairs together.

"I do not know this man," said Lord Glencore, as he gazed on the flushed and fevered face of the sick man, whose ill-trimmed and shaggy beard gave additional wildness to his look. "I have never to my knowledge seen him before."

The accents of the speaker appeared to have suddenly struck some cord in the sufferer's intelligence, for he struggled for an instant, and then, raising himself on his elbow, stared fixedly at him. "Not know me?" cried he, in English; "'tis because sorrow and sickness has changed me, then."

"Who are you? Tell me your name!" said Glencore, eagerly.

"I'm Billy Traynor, my lord, the one you remember, the doctor——"

"And my boy," screamed Glencore, wildly.

The sick man threw up both his arms in the air, and fell backward with a cry of despair; while Glencore, tottering for an instant, sank with a low groan, and fell senseless on the ground.

## CHAPTER XLVII.

## A FRAGMENT OF A LETTER.

LONG before Lord Glencore had begun to rally from an attack which had revived all the symptoms of his former illness, Billy Traynor had perfectly recovered, and was assiduously occupied in attending him. Almost the first tidings which Glencore could comprehend assured him that the boy was safe, and living at Massa under the protection of the Chevalier Stubber, and waiting eagerly for Billy to join him. A brief extract from one of the youth's letters to his warm-hearted follower will suffice to show how he himself regarded the incident which befell, and the fortune that lay before him.

\* \* \* \* \*

"It was a long swim of a dark night, too, Master Billy; and whenever the arm of a tree would jostle me, as it floated past, I felt as though that blessed courier was again upon me, and turned to give fight at once. If it were not that the river took a sudden bend, as it nears the sea, I must infallibly have been carried out; but I found myself quite suddenly in slack water, and very soon after it shallowed so much that I could walk ashore. The thought of what became of my adversary weighed more heavily on me when I touched land; indeed, while my own chances of escape were few, I took his fate easily enough. With all its dangers it was a glorious time, as, hurrying downward in the torrent, through the dark night, the thunder growling overhead, the breakers battering away on the bar, I was the only living thing there to confront that peril! What an emblem of my own fate in every thing—a headlong course—an unknown ending—darkness—utter and dayless darkness—around me, and not one single soul to say, 'Courage!' There is something splendidly exciting in the notion of having felt thoughts that others have never felt—of having set footsteps in that untracked sand, where no traveller has ever ventured. This impression never left me as I buffeted the murky waves, and struck out boldly through the surfy stream. Nay, more, it will never leave me while I live. I have now proved myself to my own heart! I have been, and for a considerable time, too, face to face with death. I have regarded my fate as certain, and yet have I not quailed in spirit or flinched in coolness? No, Billy; I reviewed every step of my strange and wayward life. I bethought me of my childhood, with all its ambitious longings, and my boyish days as sorrow first broke upon me, and I felt that there was a fitness in this darksome and mysterious ending to a life that touched on no other existence. For was I not as much

alone in the great world, as when I swam there in the yellow flood of the Magra?

"As the booming breakers of the sea met my ear, and I saw that I was nearing the wide ocean, I felt as might a soldier when charging an enemy's battery at speed. I was wildly mad with impatience to get forward, and shouted till my voice rung out above the din around me. How the mad cheer echoed in my own heart. It was the trumpet call of victory!

"Was it reaction from all this excitement—the depression that follows past danger—that made me feel low and miserable afterwards? I know I walked along towards Lorenza in listlessness, and when a *gend'arme* stopped to question me, and asked for my passport, I had not even energy to tell him how I came there! Even the intense desire to see that spot once more—to walk that garden and sit upon that terrace—all had left me: it was as though the waves had drowned the spirit and left the limbs to move unguided. He led me beside the walls of the villa, by the little wicket itself, and still I felt no touch of feeling, no memory came back on me; I was indifferent to all! and yet *you* know how many a weary mile I have come just to see them once more! to revisit a spot, where the only day-dream of my life flattered, and where I gave way to the promptings of a hope that have not often warmed this sad heart of mine!

"What a sluggish swamp has this nature of mine become, when it needs a hurricane of passion to stir it. Here I am, living, breathing, walking, and sleeping; but without one sentiment that attaches me to existence; and yet do I feel as though, whatever endangered life, or jeopardied fame, would call me up to an effort and make me of some value to myself.

"I went yesterday to see my old studio: sorry things were those strivings of mine—false endeavors to realize conceptions that must have some other interpreter than marble. Forms are but weak appeals—words are coarse ones; music alone, my dear friend, is the true voice of the heart's meanings.

"How a little melody that a peasant girl was singing last night touched me. It was one that *she* used to warble, humming as we walked, like some stray waif thrown up by memory on the waste of life.

"So then, at last, I feel I am not a sculptor; still as little, with all your teaching, am I a scholar. The world of active life offers to me none of its seductions; I only recognize what there is in it of vulgar contention and low rivalry. I cannot be any of the hundred things by which men eke out



subsistence, and yet I long for the independence of being the arbiter of my own daily life. What is to become of me?—say, dearest, best of friends—say but the word, and let me try to obey you. What of our old plans of ‘savagery?’ The fascinations of civilized habits have made no stronger hold upon me since we relinquished that grand idea! Neither you nor I assuredly have any places assigned us at the feast of this old-world life—none have bidden us to it, nor have we even the fitting garments to grace it!

“There are moments, however,—one of them is on me now while I write,—wherein I should like to storm that strong citadel of social exclusion, and test its strength. Who are they who garrison it? Are they better, and wiser, and purer than their fellows? Are they lifted by the accidents of fortune above the accidents and infirmities of nature? and are they more gentle-minded, more kindly-hearted, and more forgiving than others? This I should wish to know and learn for myself. Would they admit us for the nonce to see and judge them, let the bastard and the beggar sit down at their board, and make brotherhood with them? I trow not, Billy. They would hand us over to the police!

“And my friend the courier was not so far astray when he called us vagabonds!

“If I were free, I should, of course, be with you; but I am under a kind of mild bondage here, of which I don’t clearly comprehend the meaning. The chief minister has taken me, in some fashion, under his protection, and I am given to understand that no ill is intended me, and, indeed, so far as treatment and moderate liberty are concerned, I have every reason to be satisfied. Still there is something deeply wounding in all this mysterious ‘consideration.’ It whispers to me of an interest in me on the part of those who are ashamed to avow it—of kind feelings held in check by self-esteem. Good Heavens! what have I done, that this humiliation should be my portion? There is no need of any subtlety to teach me what I am, and what the world insists I must remain. There is no ambition I dare to strive for, no affection my heart may cherish, no honorable contest I may engage in, but that the utterance of one fatal word may not bar the gate against my entrance, and send me back in shame and confusion. Had I of myself incurred this penalty, there would be in me that stubborn sense of resistance that occurs to every one who counts the gain and loss of all his actions; but I have not done so! In the work of my own degradation I am blameless!

“I have just been told that a certain Prin-

cess De Sabloukoff is to arrive here this evening, and that I am to wait upon her immediately. Good Heavens, can she be —. The thought has just struck me, and my head is already wandering at the bare notion of it! How I pray that this may not be so; my own shame is enough and more than I can bear; but to witness that of —. Can you tell me nothing of this? But even if you can, the tidings will have come too late—I shall have already seen her.

“I am unable to write more now; my brain is burning, and my hand trembles, so that I cannot trace the letters. Adieu till this evening.

“Midnight.

“I was all in error, dear friend. I have seen her; for the last two hours we have conversed together, and my suspicion had no foundation. She evidently knows all my history, and almost gives me to believe that one day or other I may stand free of this terrible shame that oppresses me. If this were possible, what vengeance would be enough to wreak on those who have thus practised on me? Can you imagine any Vendetta that would pay off the heart-corroding misery that has made my youth like a sorrowful old age, dried up hope within me, made my ambition to be a snare, and my love a mere mockery? I could spend a life in the search after this revenge, and think it all too short to exhaust it!

“I have much to tell you of this Princess, but I doubt if I can remember it. Her manner meant so much and yet so little—there was such elegance of expression with such perfect simplicity—so much of the *finest* knowledge of life united to a kind of hopeful trust in mankind, that I kept eternally balancing in my mind whether her intelligence or her kindness had the supremacy. She spoke to me much of the Harleys. Ida was well, and at Florence. She had refused Wahnsdorf’s offer of marriage, and though ardently solicited to let time test her decision, persisted in her rejection.

“Whether she knew of my affection or not, I cannot say; but I opine not, for she talked of Ida as one whose haughty nature would decline alliance with even an imperial house if they deemed it a condescension; so that the refusal of Wahnsdorf may have been on this ground. But how can it matter to me?

“I am to remain here a week, I think they said. Sir Horace Upton is coming on his way south, and wishes to see me; but you will be with me ere that time, and then we can plan our future together. As this web of intrigue, for so I cannot but feel it, draws more closely around me, I grow more

and more impatient to break bounds and be away! It is evident enough that *my* destiny is to be the sport of some accident, lucky or unlucky, in the fate of others. Shall I await this?

"And they have given me money and fine clothes, and a servant to wait upon me, and I am called by my real name, and treated like one of condition. Is this but another act of the drama, the first scene of which was an old ruined castle in Ireland? They will fail signally if they think so; a heart can be broken only once! They may even feel sorry for what they have done, but I can never forgive them for what they have made me! Come to me, dear, kind friend, as soon as you can; you little know how far your presence reconciles me to the world and to myself!

Ever yours,

"C. M."

This letter Billy Traynor read over and over as he sat by Glencore's bedside. It was his companion in the long dreary hours of the night, and he pondered over it as he sat in the darkened room at noonday.

"What is that you are crumpling up there? from whom is the letter?" said Lord Glencore, as Billy hurriedly endeavored to conceal the oft-perused epistle. "Nay," cried he, suddenly correcting himself, "you need not tell me; I asked without forethought." He paused a few seconds, and then went on: "I am now as much recovered as I ever hope to be, and you may leave me to-morrow. I know that both your wish and your duty call you elsewhere. Whatever future fortune may betide any of us, you at least have been a true and faithful friend, and shall never want! As I count upon your honesty to keep a pledge, I reckon on your delicacy not asking the reasons for it. You will, therefore, not speak of having been with me here. To mention me would be but to bring up bitter memories."

In the pause which now ensued, Billy Traynor's feelings underwent a sore trial; for while he bethought him that now or never had come the moment to reconcile the father and the son, thus mysteriously separated, his fears also whispered the danger of any ill-advised step on his part, and the injury he might by possibility inflict on one he loved best on earth.

"You make me this pledge, therefore, before we part," said Lord Glencore, who continued to ruminate on what he had spoken. "It is less for *my* sake than that of another." Billy took the hand Glencore tendered towards him respectfully in his own, and kissed it twice.

"There are men who have no need of oaths to ratify their faith and trustfulness.

You are one of them, Traynor," said Lord Glencore, affectionately.

Billy tried to speak, but his heart was too full, and he could not utter a word.

"A dying man's words have ever their solemn weight," said Glencore, "and mine beseech you not to desert one who has no prize in life equal to your friendship. Promise me nothing, but do not forget my prayer to you;" and with this Lord Glencore turned away, and buried his face between his hands.

"And in the name of Heaven," muttered Billy to himself, as he stole away, "what is it that keeps them apart, and won't let them love one another? Sure it wasn't in nature that a boy of his years could ever do what would separate them this way. What could he possibly say or do that his father mightn't forget and forgive by this time? And then if it wasn't the child's fault at all, where's the justice in makin' him pay for another's crime? Sure enough, great people must be unlike poor craytures like me, in their hearts and feelin's as well as in their grandeur; and there must be things that *we* never mind nor think of, that are thought to be mortal injuries by *them*. Ay, and that is raysonable, too! We see the same in the mata'yrial world. There are fevers that some never takes; and there's climates some can live in, and no others can bear!

"I suppose, now," said he, with a wise shake of the head, "pride—pride is at the root of it all, some way or other; and if it is, I may give up the investigation at onst, for divil a one o' me knows what pride is! barrin' it's the delight one feels in consthruin' a hard bit in a Greek chorus, or hittin' the manin' of a doubtful passage in ould Æschylus. But what's the good o' me puzzlin' myself? If I was to speculate for fifty years, I'd never be able to think like a Lord, after all!" And with this conclusion he began to prepare for his journey.

#### CHAPTER XLVIII.

HOW A SOVEREIGN TREATS WITH HIS MINISTER.

"WHAT can have brought them here, Stubber?" said the Duke of Massa, as he walked to and fro in his dressing-room, with an air of considerable perturbation. "Be assured of one thing, they have come for mischief! I know that Sabloukoff well. *She* it was separated Prince Max from my sister, and that Montenegro affair was all *her* doing also."

"I don't suspect——"

"Don't you? Well, then, *I* do, sir; and that's enough," said he, interrupting; "and as to Upton—he's well known



throughout Europe—a ‘mauvais coucheur!’ Stubber: that’s what the Emperor Franz called him—a ‘mauvais coucheur,’ one of those fellows England employs to get up the embarrassments she so deeply deplores. Eh, Stubber; that’s the phrase; ‘while we deeply deplore the condition of the kingdom’—that’s always the exordium to sending out a fleet or an impertinent dispatch. But I’ll not endure it here. I have my sovereign rights, my independence, my allies. By the way, haven’t my allies taken possession of the opera-house for a bar-rack?”

“That they have, sir; and they threaten an encampment in the court gardens.”

“An open insult—an outrage;—and have you endured and submitted to this?”

“I have refused the permission; but they may very possibly take no heed of my protest.”

“And you’ll tell me that I am the ruler of this State?”

“No, but I’ll say you might if you liked to be so.”

“How so, Stubber; come, my worthy fellow, what’s your plan?—you have a plan, I’m certain—but I guess it: turn Protestant, hunt out the Jesuits, close the churches, demolish the monasteries, and send for an English frigate down to the Marino, where there’s not water to float a fishing-boat. But no, sir, I’ll have no such alliances; I’ll throw myself on the loyalty and attachment of my people, and—I’ll raise the taxes. Eh, Stubber. We’ll tax the ‘colza’ and the quarries! If they demur, we’ll abdicate; that’s my last word—abdicate.”

“I wonder who this sick man can be that accompanies Upton,” said Stubber, who never suffered himself to be moved by his master’s violence.

“Another firebrand—another emissary of English disturbance. Hardenberg was perfectly right when he said the English nation pays off the meanest subserviency to their own aristocracy, by hunting down all that is noble in every state of Europe. There, sir, he hit the mark in the very centre. Slaves at home, rebels abroad—that’s your code!”

“We contrive to mix up a fair share of liberty with our bondage, sir.”

“In your talk—only in your talk; and in the newspapers, Stubber. I have studied you closely and attentively. You submit to more social indignities than any nation, ancient or modern. I was in London in—’15, and I remember, at a race-course—Ascot, they called it—the Prince had a certain horse called Rufus.”

“I rode him,” said Stubber, drily.

“You rode him?”

“Yes, sir. I was his jock for the King’s Plate. There was a matter of twenty-eight started,—the largest field ever known for the Cup,—and Rufus reared, and falling back, killed his rider; and the Duke of Dunrobin sent for me, and told me to mount. That’s the way I came to be there.”

“Per Bacco. It was a splendid race, and I’m sure I never suspected, when I cheered you coming in, that I was welcoming my future minister. Eh, Stubber, only fancy what a change!”

Stubber only shrugged his shoulders, as though the alteration in fortune was no such great prize, after all.

“I won two thousand guineas on that day, Stubber. Lord Heddleworth paid me in gold, I remember; for they picked my pocket of three rouleau on the course. The Prince laughed so at dinner about it, and said it was pure patriotism not to suffer exportation of bullion. A great people the English, that I must say! The display of wealth was the grandest spectacle I ever beheld; and such beauty, too! By the way, Stubber, our ballet here is detestable. Where did they gather together that gang of horrors?”

“What signifies it, sir, if the Austrian jagers are bivouacked in the theatre?”

“Very true, by Jove!” said the Duke, pondering. “Can’t we hit upon something—have you no happy suggestion?—I have it, Stubber—an admirable thought. We’ll have Upton to dinner. We’ll make it appear that he has come here specially to treat with us. There is a great coldness just now between St. James’ and Vienna. Upton will be charmed with the thought of an intrigue; so will be La Sabloukoff. We’ll not invite the Field-Marshal Rosenkrantz: that will itself offend Austria. Eh, Stubber, isn’t it good? Say to-morrow at six, and go yourself with the invitation.”

And, overjoyed with the notion of his own subtlety, the Prince walked up and down, laughing heartily, and rubbing his hands in glee.

Stubber, however, was too well versed in the changability of his master’s nature to exhibit any rash promptitude in obeying him.

“You must manage to let the English papers speak of this, Stubber. The ‘Augsburg Gazette’ will be sure to copy the paragraph, and what a sensation it will create at Vienna!”

“I am inclined to think Upton has come here about that young fellow we gave up to the Austrians last autumn, and for whom he desires to claim some compensation and an ample apology.”

“Apology, of course, Stubber—humilia-

tion to any extent. I'll send the Minister Landelli into exile—to the galleys if they insist, but I'll not pay a scudo! my royal word on it! But who says that such is the reason of his presence here?"

"I had a hint of it last night, and I received a polite note from Upton this morning, asking when he might have a few moments' conversation with me."

"Go to him, Stubber, with our invitation. Ask him if he likes shooting? Say I am going to Serravezza on Saturday; sound him if he desires to have the Red Cross of Massa; hint that I am an ardent admirer of his public career, and be sure to tell me his sayings and doings, if he comes to dinner."

"There is to be a dinner, then, sir?" asked Stubber, with the air of one partly struggling with a conviction.

"I have said so, Chevalier!" replied the Prince, haughtily, and in the tone of a man whose decisions were irrevocable. "I mean to dine in the State apartments, and to have a reception in the evening, just to show Rosenkrantz how cheaply we hold him. Eh, Stubber? It will half kill him to come with the general company!"

Stubber gave a faint sigh, as though fresh complications and more troubles would be the sole results of this brilliant tactic.

"If I were well served and faithfully obeyed, there is not a sovereign in Europe who would boast a more independent position. Protected by my bold people, envied by my native Apennines, and sustained by the proud consciousness—the proud consciousness—that I cannot injure a State which has not sixpence in the treasury! Eh, Stubber?" cried he with a burst of merry laughter—"that's the grand feature of composure and dignity, to know you can't be worse! and that, we, Italian princes, can all indulge in. Look at the Pope himself, he is collecting the imposts a year in advance!"

"I hope that this country is more equitably administered," said Stubber.

"So do I, sir. Were I not impressed with the full conviction that the subjects of this realm were in the very fullest enjoyment of every liberty consistent with public tranquillity, protected in the maintenance of every privilege—by the way, talking of privileges, they mustn't play 'Trottole' on the high roads, though they sent one of those cursed wheels flying between the legs of my horse yesterday, so that if I hadn't been an old cavalry soldier, I must have been thrown! I ordered the whole village to be fined three hundred scudi, one half of which to be sent to the shrine of our Lady Soretta, who really, I believe, kept me in my saddle!"

"If the people had sufficient occupation, they'd not play 'Trottole,'" said Stubber, sternly.

"And whose the fault if they have not, sir? How many months have I been entreating to have those terraced gardens finished towards the sea? I want that olive wood, too, all stubbed up, and the ground laid out in handsome parterres. How repeatedly have I asked for a bridge over that ornamental lake? and as to the island, there's not a magnolia planted in it yet. Public works, indeed; find me the money, Stubber, and I'll suggest the works! Then, there's that villa, the residence of those English people, have we not made a purchase of it?"

"No, your Highness; we could not agree about the terms, and I have just heard that the stranger who is travelling with Upton is going to buy it."

"Stepping in between me and an object I have in view! And in my own Duchy, too! And you have the hardihood to tell me that you knew of and permitted this negotiation to go on?"

"There's nothing in the law to prevent it, sir!"

"The law! What impertinence to tell me of the law! Why, sir, it is I am the law—I am the head and fountain of all law here—without my sanction what can presume to be legal?"

"I opine that the act which admits foreigners to possess property in the State was passed in the life of your Highness' father."

"I'll repeat it, then! It saps the nationality of a people; it is a blow aimed at the very heart of independent sovereignty. I may stand alone in all Europe on this point, but I will maintain it. And as to this stranger, let his passport be sent to him on the spot."

"He may possibly be an Englishman, your Highness, and remember that we have already a troublesome affair on our hands, with that other youth who in some way claims Upton's protection. Had we not better go more cautiously to work? I can see and speak with him."

"What a tyranny is this English interference? There is not a land from Sweden to Sicily, where, on some assumed ground of humanity, your government have not dared to impose their opinions! You presume to assert that all men must feel precisely like your dogged and hard-headed countrymen, and that what are deemed grievances in your land should be thought so elsewhere. You write up a code for the whole world, built out of the materials of all your national prejudices—your insular conceit—ay, and out of the very exigencies



of your bad climate; and then you say to us, blessed in the enjoyment of light hearts and God's sunshine, that we must think and feel as you do! I am not astonished that my nobles are discontented with the share you possess of my confidence; they must long have seen how little suited the maxims of your national policy are to the habits of a happier population!"

"The people are far better than their nobles—that I'm sure of," said Stubber, stoutly.

"You want to preach Socialism to me, and hope to convert me to that splendid doctrine of communism we hear so much of. You are a dangerous fellow—a very dangerous fellow. It was precisely men of your stamp sapped the monarchy in France, and with it all monarchy in Europe."

"If your Highness intends Proserpine to run at Bologna, she ought to be put in training at once," said Stubber, gravely, "and we might send up some of the weeds at the same time, and sell them off."

"Well thought of, Stubber, and there was something else in my head—what was it?"

"The suppression of the San Lorenzo convent, perhaps; it is all completed, and only waits your Highness to sign the deed."

"What sum does it give us, Stubber, eh?"

"About one hundred and eighty thousand scudi, sir, of which some twenty thousand go to the National Mortgage Fund—"

"Not one crown of it—not a single bajocco, as I am a Christian knight and a true gentleman. I need it all if it were twice as much. If we incur the anger of the Pope and the Sacred College, if we risk the thunders of the Vatican, let us have the worldly consolation of a full purse."

"I advised the measure on wiser grounds, sir. It was not fair and just that a set of lazy friars should be leading lives of indolence and abundance in the midst of a hard-worked and ill-fed peasantry—"

"Quite true, and on these wise grounds, as you call them, we have root them out. We only wish that the game were more plenty, for the sport amuses us vastly." And he clapped Stubber familiarly on the shoulder, and laughed heartily at his jest.

It was in this happy frame of mind that Stubber always liked to leave his master; and so, promising to attend to the different subjects discussed between them, he bowed and withdrew.

## CHAPTER XLIX.

## SOCIAL DIPLOMACIES.

"WHAT an insufferable bore, dear Princess," sighed Sir Horace, as he opened the

square-shaped envelope that contained his Royal Highness' invitation to dinner.

"I mean to be seriously indisposed," said Madame de Sabloukoff; "one gets nothing but chagrin in intercourse with petty Courts."

"Like provincial journals, they only reproduce what has appeared in the metropolitan papers, and give you old gossip for fresh intelligence."

"Or, worse again, ask you to take an interest in their miserable 'localisms'—the microscopic contentions of insect life!"

"They have given us a sentry at the door, I perceive," said Sir Horace, with assumed indifference.

"A very proper attention!" remarked the lady, in a tone that more than half implied the compliment was one intended for herself.

"Have you seen the Chevalier Stubber yet?" asked Upton.

"No; he has been twice here, but I was dressing or writing notes. And you?"

"I told him to come about two o'clock," sighed Sir Horace. "I rather like Stubber."

This was said in a tone of such condescension that it sounded as though the utterer was confessing to an amiable weakness in his nature—"I rather like Stubber."

Though there was something meant to invite agreement in the tone, the Princess only accepted the speech with a slight motion of her eyebrows, and a look of half unwilling assent.

"I know he's not of *your* world, dear Princess, but he belongs to that Anglo-Saxon stock we are so prone to associate with all the ideas of rugged, unadorned virtue."

"Rugged and unadorned, indeed!" echoed the lady.

"And yet never vulgar!" rejoined Upton. "Never affecting to be other than he is, and, stranger still, not self-opinionated and conceited."

"I own to you," said she, haughtily, "that the whole Court here puts me in mind of Hayti, with its Marquis of Orgeat, and its Count Marmalade. These people, elevated from menial station to a mock nobility, only serve to throw ridicule upon themselves, and the order that they counterfeited. No socialist in Europe has done such service to the cause of democracy as the Prince of Massa!"

"Honesty is such a very rare quality in this world, that I am not surprised at his Highness prizing it under any garb. Now, Stubber is honest!"

"He says so himself, I am told."

"Yes, he says so, and I believe him. He has been employed in situations of considerable trust, and always acquitted himself well. Such a man cannot have escaped temptations, and yet even his enemies do not accuse him of venality."

"Good Heavens! what more would he have than his legitimate spoils? He is a Minister of the Household, with an ample salary—a Master of the Horse—an Inspector of Woods and Forests—a something over Church-lands, and a Red Cross of Massa besides. I am quite 'made up' in his dignities, for they are all set forth on his visiting-card, with what purports to be a coat of arms at top;" and, as she spoke, she held out the card in derision.

"That's silly, I must say," said Upton, smiling, "and yet, I suppose, that here in Massa it was requisite he should assert all his pretensions thus openly."

"Perhaps so," said she, drily.

"And after all," said Upton, who seemed rather bent on a system of mild tormenting—"after all, there is something amiable in the weakness of this display—it smacks of gratitude! It is like saying to the world, see what the munificence of my master has made me!"

"What a delicate compliment, too, to his nobles which proclaims that, for a station of trust and probity, the Prince must recruit from the kitchen and the stables. To my thinking, there is no such impertinent delusion as that popular one which asserts that we must seek for every thing in its least likely place—take ministers out of counting-houses, and military commanders from shop-boards. For the treatment of weighty questions in peace or war, the gentleman element is the first essential. Just so long as the world thinks so, dear Princess, not an hour longer!"

The Princess arose, and walked the room in evident displeasure. She half suspected that his objections were only desires to irritate, and she determined not to prolong the discussion. The temptation to reply proved, however, too strong for her resolution, and she said, "The world has thought so for some centuries; and when a passing shade of doubt has shaken the conviction, have not the people rushed from revolution into actual bondage, as though any despotism were better than the tyranny of their own passions?"

"I opine," said Upton, calmly, "that the 'prestige' of the gentleman consists in his belonging to an 'order.' Now that is a privilege that cannot be enjoyed by a mere popular leader. It is like the contrast between a club and a public meeting!"

"It is something that you confess these

people have no 'prestige,'" said she, triumphantly. "Indeed, their presence in the world of politics, to my thinking, is a mere symbol of change—an evidence that we are in some stage of transition."

"So we are, Madame; there is nothing more true. Every people of Europe has outgrown their governments, like young heirs risen to manhood, ordering household affairs to their will. The popular voice now swells above the whisper of cabinets. So long as each country limits itself to home questions, this spirit will attract but slight notice. Let the issue, however, become a great international one, and you will see the popular will declaring wars, cementing alliances, and signing peaces in a fashion to make statecraft tremble!"

"And you approve of this change, and welcome it?" asked she, derisively.

"I have never said so, Madame. I foresee the hurricane, that's all. Men like Stubber are to be seen almost everywhere throughout Europe. They are a kind of declaration that for the government and guidance of mankind, the possession of a good head and an honest heart is amply sufficient; that rulers neither need fourteen quarterings nor names coeval with the Roman Empire."

"You have given me but another reason to detest him," said the Princess, angrily. "I don't think I shall receive him to-day."

"But you want to speak with him about that villa; there is some formality to be gone through before a foreigner can own property here. I think you promised Glencore you would arrange the matter."

She made no reply, and he continued: "Poor fellow, a very short lease would suffice for his time; he is sinking rapidly. The conflict his mind wages between hope and doubt has hastened all the symptoms of his malady."

"In such a struggle a woman has more courage than a man."

"Say more boldness, Princess," said Upton, slyly.

"I repeat courage, sir. It is fear, and nothing but fear, that agitates him. He is afraid of the world's sneer; afraid of what society will think, and say, and write about him; afraid of the petty gossip of the millions he will never see or hear of. This cowardice it is that checks him in every aspiration to vindicate his wife's honor and his boy's birth."

"*Si cela se peut*," said Upton with a very equivocal smile.

A look of haughty anger, with a flush of crimson on her cheek, was the only answer she made him.

"I mean that he is really not in a position to prove or disprove any thing. He assumed



certain 'levities'—I suppose the word will do—to mean more than levities; he construed indiscretions into grave faults and faults into crimes. But that he did all this without sufficient reason, or that he now has abundant evidence that he was mistaken, I am unable to say, nor is it with broken faculties and a wandering intellect that he can be expected to review the past and deliver judgment on it."

"The whole moral of which is—what a luckless fate is that of a foreign wife united to an English husband."

"There is much force in the remark," said Upton, calmly.

"To have her thoughts, and words, and actions submitted to the standard of a nation whose moral subtleties she could never comprehend, to be taught that a certain amount of gloom must be mixed up with life, just as bitters are taken for tonics, that ennui is the sure type of virtue, and low spirits the healthiest condition of the mind—these are her first lessons: no wonder if she find them hard ones.

"To be told that all the harmless familiarities she has seen from her childhood are dangerous freedoms, all the innocent gayeties of the world about her are snares and pitfalls, is to make existence little better than a penal servitude—this is lesson the second. While, to complete her education, she is instructed how to assume a censorial rigidity of manner that would shame a duenna, and a condemnatory tone that assumes to arraign all the criminals of society, and pass sentence on them. How amiable she may become in disposition, and how suitable as a companion by this training, *you*, sir, and your countrymen are best able to pronounce."

"You rather exaggerate our demerits, my dear Princess," said Upton, smiling. "We really do *not* like to be so very odious as you would make us."

"You are excellent people with whom no one can live, that's the whole of it," said she, with a saucy laugh. "If your friend, Lord Glencore, had been satisfied to stay at home, and marry one of his own nation, he might have escaped a deal of unhappiness, and saved a most amiable creature much more sorrow than falls to the lot of the least fortunate of her own country. I conclude you have some influence over him?"

"As much, perhaps, as any one; but even that says little."

"Can you not use it, therefore, to make him repair a great wrong?"

"You had some plan, I think?" said he, hesitatingly.

"Yes; I have written to her to come down here. I have pretended that her pres-

ence is necessary to certain formalities about the sale of the villa. I mean that they should meet without apprising either of them. I have sent the boy out of the way to Pontremoli, to make me a copy of some frescoes there; till the success of my scheme be decided, I did not wish to make him a party to it."

"You don't know Glencore, at least as I know him—"

"There is no reason that I should," broke she in. "What I would try is an experiment, every detail of which I would leave to chance. Were this a case where all the wrong were on one side, and all the forgiveness to come from the other, friendly aid and interposition might well be needed; but here is a complication which neither you, nor I, nor any one else can pretend to unravel. Let them meet, therefore, and let Fate—if that be the name for it—decide what all the prevention and planning in the world could never provide for."

"The very fact that their meeting has been plotted beforehand will suggest distrust."

"Their manner in meeting will be the best answer to that," said she, resolutely. "There will be no acting between them, depend upon't."

"He told me that he had destroyed the registry of their marriage, nor does he know where a single witness of the ceremony could be found."

"I don't care to know *how* he could make the *amende* till I know that he is ready to do it," said she, in the same calm tone.

"To have arranged a meeting with the boy had, perhaps, been better than this. Glencore has not avowed it, but I think I can detect misgivings for his treatment of the youth."

"This was my first thought, and I spoke to young Massy the evening before Lord Glencore arrived. I led him to tell me of his boyish days in Ireland and his home there; a stern resolution to master all emotion seemed to pervade whatever he said; and though, perhaps, the effort may have cost him much, his manner did not betray it. He told me that he was illegitimate, that the secret was divulged to him by his own father, that he had never heard who his mother was nor what rank in life she occupied. When I said that she was one in high station, that she was alive and well, and one of my own dearest friends, a sudden crimson covered his face, as quickly followed by a sickly pallor; and though he trembled in every limb, he never spoke a word. I endeavored to excite in him some desire to learn more of her if not to see her, but in vain. The hard lesson he had taught him-

self enabled him to repress every semblance of feeling. It was only when at last driven to the very limits of my patience, I abruptly asked him, 'Have you no wish to see your mother?' that his coldness gave way, and, in a voice tremulous and thick, he said, 'My shame is enough for myself.' I was burning to say more, to put before him a contingency, the mere shadow of a possibility that his claim to birth and station might one day or other be vindicated. I did not actually do so, but I must have let drop some chance word that betrayed my meaning, for he caught me up quickly and said, 'It would come too late, if it came even to-day. I am that which I am by many a hard struggle—you'll never see me risk a disappointment in life by any encouragement I may give to hope.'

"I then adverted to his father, but he checked me at once, saying: 'When the ties that should be closest in life are stained with shame and dishonor, they are bonds of slavery, not of affection. My debt to Lord Glencore is the degradation I live in—none other. His heritage to me is the undying conflict in my heart between what I once thought I was and I now know I am. If we met, it would be to tell him so.' In a word, every feature of the father's proud unforgiveness is reproduced in the boy, and I dreaded the very possibility of their meeting. If ever Lord Glencore avow his marriage and vindicate his wife's honor, his hardest task will be reconciliation with this boy."

"All, and more than all, the evils I anticipated have followed this insane vengeance," said Upton. "I begin to think that one ought to leave a golden bridge even to our revenge, Princess."

"Assuredly, wherever a woman is the victim," said she smiling; "for you are so certain to have reasons for distrusting yourself."

Upton sat meditating for some time on the plan of the Princess; had it only originated with himself, it was exactly the kind of project he would have liked. He knew enough of life to be aware that one can do very little more than launch events upon the great ocean of destiny; that the pretension to guide and direct them is oftener a snare than any thing else; that the contingencies and accidents, the complications too which beset every move in life, disconcert all one's pre-arrangements, so that it is rare indeed when we are able to pursue the same path toward any object by which we have set out.

As the scheme was, however, that of another, he now scrutinized it, and weighed every objection to its accomplishment, constantly returning to the same difficulty, as he said:

"You do not know Glencore."

"The man who has but one passion, one impulse in life, is rarely a difficult study," was the measured reply. "Lord Glencore's vengeance has worn itself out, exactly as all similar outbreaks of temper do, for want of opposition. There was nothing to feed, nothing to minister to it. He sees, I have taken care that he should see—that his bolt has not struck the mark; that her position is not the precarious thing he meant to make it, but a station as much protected and fenced round by its own conventionalities as that of any, the proudest lady in society. For one that dares to impugn her, there are full fifty ready to condemn *him*; and all this has been done without reprisal or re-creation; no partisanship to arraign his moroseness and his cruelty—none of that 'coterie' defence which divides society into two sections. This, of course, has wounded his pride, but it has not stimulated his anger; but above all, it has imparted to her the advantage of a dignity of which his vengeance was intended to deprive her."

"You must be a sanguine and a hopeful spirit, Princess, if you deem that such elements will unite happily hereafter," said Upton, smiling.

"I really never carried my speculations so far," replied she. "It is in actual life as in that of the stage, quite sufficient to accompany the actors to the fall of the curtain."

"The Chevalier Stubber, Madame," said a servant, entering, "wishes to know if you will receive him."

"Yes—no—yes. Tell him to come in," said she, rapidly, as she resumed her seat beside the fire.

#### CHAPTER L.

##### ANTE-DINNER REFLECTIONS.

NOTWITHSTANDING the strongly expressed sentiments of the Princess with regard to the Chevalier Stubber, she received him with marked favor, and gave him her hand to kiss with evident cordiality. As for Upton, it was the triumph of his manner to deal with men separated widely from himself in station and abilities. He could throw such an air of good fellowship into the smallest attentions, impart such a glow of kindness to the veriest commonplaces, that the very craftiest and shrewdest could never detect. As he leaned his arm, therefore, on Stubber's shoulder, and smiled benignly on him, you would have said it was the affectionate meeting with a long absent brother. But there was something besides this; there was the expansive confidence accorded to a trusty colleague, and as he asked him about the Duchy, its taxation, its debt, its alli-



ances, and difficulties, you might mark in the attention he bestowed all the signs of one receiving very valuable information.

"You perceive, Princess," said he, at last, "Stubber quite agrees with the Duke of Cloudsley—these small states enjoy no real independence."

"Then why are they not absorbed into the larger nations about them?"

"They have their uses; they are like substances interposed between conflicting bodies which receive and diminish the shock of collisions. So that Prussia, when wanting to wound Austria, only pinches Baden; and Austria, desirous of insulting Saxony, 'takes it out' on Sigmaringen."

"It's a pleasant destiny you assign them," said she, laughing.

"Stubber will tell you I'm not far wrong in my appreciation."

"I'm not for what they call 'mediatizing' them neither, my lady," said Stubber, who generally used the designation to imply his highest degree of respect. "That may all be very well for the interests of the great states and the balance of power, and all that sort of thing; but we ought also to bestow a thought upon the people of these small countries, especially on the inhabitants of their cities. What's to become of *them* when you withdraw their courts, and throw their little capitals into the position of provincial towns and even villages?"

"They will eke out a livelihood somehow, my dear Stubber. Be assured that they'll not starve. Masters of the Horse may have to keep livery stables; chamberlains turn valets; ladies of the bedchamber descend to the arts of millinery; but, after all, the change will be but in name, and there will not be a whit more slavery in the new condition than in the old one."

"Well, I'm not so sure they'll take the same comfortable view of it that you do, Sir Horace," said Stubber; "nor can I see who can possibly want livery stables, or smart bonnets, or even a fine butler, when the resources of the court are withdrawn, and the city left to its own devices."

"Stubber suspects," said Upton, "that the policy which prevails amongst our great landed proprietors against small holdings is that which at present influences the larger states of Europe against small kingdoms, and so far he is right. It is unquestionably the notion of our day that the influences of government require space for their exercise."

"If the happiness of the people was to be thought of, which of course it is not," said Stubber, "I'd say, leave them as they are."

"Ah, my dear Stubber, you are now drawing the question into the realm of the

imaginary. What do any of us know about our happiness?"

"Enough to eat and drink, a comfortable roof over you, good clothes, nothing oppressive or unequal in the laws, these go for a good way to the kind of thing I mean; and let me observe, sir, it is a great privilege little states like little people enjoy, that they need have no ambitions. They don't want to conquer anybody; they neither ask for the mouth of a river here or an island there, and if only let alone they'll never disturb the peace of the world at large."

"My dear Stubber, you are quite a proficient at state craft," said Upton, with the very least superciliousness in the accent.

"Well, I don't know, Sir, Horace," said the other, modestly, "but as my master's means are about the double of what they were when I entered his service, and as the people pay about one-sixth less in taxes than they used to do, mayhap I might say that I have put the saddle on the right part of the back."

"Your foreign policy does not seem quite as unobjectionable as your home management. That was an ugly business about that boy you gave up to the Austrians."

"Well, there were mistakes on all sides. You yourself, Sir Horace, gave him a false passport; his real name turns out to be Massy; it made an impression on me, from a circumstance that happened when I was a young fellow, living as pad-groom with Prince Totskoy. I went over on a lark one day to Capri, and was witness to a wedding there of a young Englishman called Massy."

"Were you then present at the ceremony?"

"Yes, sir, and what's stranger still, I have a voucher for it."

"A voucher for it. What do you mean?"

"It was this way, sir. There was a great supper for the country people and the servants, and I was there, and I suppose I took too much of that Capri wine; it was new and hot at the time, and I got into a row of some sort, and I beat the Deputato from some place or t'other, and got locked up for three days; and the priest, a very jolly fellow, gave me under his hand-writing a voucher that I had been a witness of the marriage and all the festivities afterwards, just to show my master how every thing happened. But the Prince never asked me for any explanations, and only said, he 'hoped I had amused myself well,' and so I kept my voucher to myself, and I have it at this very hour."

"Will you let me see it, Stubber?"

"To be sure, sir, you shall have it, if I

can lay my hand on't in the course of the day."

"Let me beg that you will go at once and search for it; it may be of more importance than you know of. Go, my dear Stubber, and look it up."

"I'll not lose a moment since you wish to have it," said Stubber, "and I'm sure your ladyship will excuse my abrupt departure."

The Princess assured him that her own interest in the document was not inferior to that of Sir Horace, and he hastened off to prosecute his search.

"Here, then, are all my plans altered at once," exclaimed she, as the door closed after him. "If this paper mean only as much as he asserts, it will be ample proof of marriage, and lead us to the knowledge of all those who were present at it."

"Yet must we well reflect on the use we make of it," said Upton. "Glencore is now evidently balancing what course to take. As his chances of recovery grow less each day, he seems to incline more and more to repair the wrong he has done. Should we show on our side the merest semblance of compulsion, I would not answer for him."

"So that we have the power, as a last resource, I am content to diplomatize," said the Princess; "but you must see him this evening, and press for a decision."

"He has already asked me to come to him after we return from court. It will be late, but it is the hour he likes best to talk. If I see occasion for it, I can allude to what Stubber has told us, but it will be only if driven by necessity to it."

"I would act more boldly and more promptly," said she.

"And rouse an opposition perhaps that already is becoming dormant. No, I know Glencore well, and will deal with him more patiently."

"From the Chevalier Stubber, your Excellency," said a servant, presenting a sealed packet, and Sir Horace opened it at once. The envelope contained a small and shabby slip of paper, of which the writing appeared faint and indistinct. It was dated 1826, Church of San Lorezo, Capri, and went to certify that Guglielmo Stubber had been

present on the morning of the 18th August, at the marriage of the Most Noble Signor Massy with the Princess de la Torre, having in quality as witness signed the registry thereof, and then went on to state the circumstance of his attendance at the supper, and the event which ensued. It bore the name of the writer at the foot, Basilio Nardoni, Priest of the aforesaid Church and Village.

"Little is Glencore aware that such an evidence as this is in existence," said Upton. "The conviction that he had his vengeance in his power led him into this insane project. He fancied there was not a flaw in that terrible indictment; and see, here is enough to open the door to truth, and undo every detail of all his plotting. How strange is it, that the events of life should so often concur to expose the dark schemes of men's hearts; proofs starting up in unthought-of places, as though to show how vain was mere subtlety in conflict with the inevitable law of Fate."

"This Basilio Nardoni is an acquaintance of mine," said the Princess, bent on pursuing another train of thought; "he was chaplain to the Cardinal Caraffa, and frequently brought me communications from his Eminence. He can be found if wanted."

"It is unlikely—most unlikely—that we shall require him."

"If you mean that Lord Glencore will himself make all the amends he can for a gross injury, and a fraud, no more is necessary," said she, folding the paper and placing it in her pocket-book; "but if any thing short of this be intended, then there is no exposure too open,—no publicity too wide to be given to the most cruel wrong the world has ever heard of."

"Leave me to deal with Glencore. I think I am about the only one who can treat with him."

"And now for this dinner at court, for I have changed my mind and mean to go," said the Princess. "It is full time to dress, I believe."

"It is almost six o'clock," said Upton, starting up. "We have quite forgotten ourselves."



## CHAPTER LI.

## CONFLICTING THOUGHTS.

THE Princess Sabloukoff found—not by any means an unfrequent experience in life—that the dinner, whose dulness she had dreaded, turned out a very pleasant affair. The Prince was unusually gracious. He was in good spirits, and put forth powers of agreeability which had been successful in one of less distinction than himself. He possessed, eminently, what a great orator once panegyricized as a high conversational element, “great variety,” and could without abruptness pass from subject to subject, with always what showed he had bestowed thought upon the theme before him. Great people have few more enviable privileges than that they choose their own topics for conversation. Nothing disagreeable, nothing wearisome, nothing inopportune can be obtruded upon them. When they have no longer any thing worth saying, they can change the subject or the company.

His Highness talked with Madame de Sabloukoff on questions of state as he might have talked with a Metternich; he even invited from her expressions of opinion that were almost counsels, sentiments that might pass for warnings. He ranged over the news of the day, relating occasionally some little anecdote, every actor in which was a celebrity; or now and then communicating some piece of valueless secrecy, told with all the mystery of a “great fact;” and then he discussed with Upton the condition of England, and deplored, as all continental rulers do, the impending downfall of that kingdom, from the growing force of our restless and daring democracy. He regretted much that Sir Horace was not still in office, but consoled himself by reflecting that the pleasure he enjoyed in his society had been in that case denied him. In fact, what with insinuated flatteries, little signs of confidence, and a most marked tone of cordiality, purposely meant to strike beholders, the Prince conducted the conversation right royally, and played “Highness” to perfection.

And these two crafty, keen-sighted people, did they not smile at the performance, and did they not, as they drove home at night, amuse themselves as they recounted the little traits of the great man’s dupery? Not a bit of it. They were charmed with his gracious manner, and actually enchanted with his agreeability. Strong in their self-esteem, they could not be brought to suspect that any artifice could be practised on *them*, or that the mere trickery and tinsel of high station could be imposed on them as true value. Nay, they even went further, and

discovered that his Highness was really a very remarkable man, and one who received far less than the estimation due to him. His flightiness became versatility; his eccentricity was all originality; and ere they reached the hotel, they had endowed him with almost every moral and mental quality that can dignify manhood.

“It is really a magnificent tourquoise,” said the Princess, gazing with admiration at a ring the Prince had taken from his own finger to present to her.

“How absurd is that English jealousy about foreign decorations. I was obliged to decline the red cross of Massa which his Highness proposed to confer on me. A monarchy that wants to emulate a republic is simply ridiculous.”

“You English are obliged to pay dear for your hypocrisies; and you ought, for you really love them;” and with this taunt, the carriage stopped at the door of the inn.

As Upton passed up the stairs the waiter handed him a note, which he hastily opened; it was from Glencore, and in these words:

“Dear Upton,—I can bear this suspense no longer; to remain here canvassing with myself all the doubts that beset me is a torture I cannot endure. I leave, therefore, at once for Florence. Once there—where I mean to see and hear for myself—I can decide what is to be the fate of the few days or weeks that yet remain to—Yours,

“GLENCORE.”

“He is gone, then—his lordship has started?”

“Yes, your Excellency, he is by this time near Lucca, for he gave orders to have horses ready at all the stations.”

“Read that, Madame,” said Upton, as he once more found himself alone with the Princess; “you will see that all your plans are disconcerted. He is off to Florence.”

Madame de Sabloukoff read the note, and threw it carelessly on the table. “He wants to forgive himself, and only hesitates how to do so gracefully,” said she, sneeringly.

“I think you are less than just to him,” said Upton, mildly; “his is a noble nature, disfigured by one grand defect.”

“Your national character, like your language, is so full of incongruities and contradictions, that I am not ashamed to own myself unequal to master it; but it strikes me that both one and the other usurp freedoms that are not permitted to others. At all events, I am rejoiced that he is gone. It is the most wearisome thing in life to negotiate with one too near you. Diplomacy of even the humblest kind requires distance.”

“You agree with the duellist, I perceive,”

said he, laughing, "that twelve paces is a more fatal distance than across a handkerchief—proximity begets tremor."

"You have guessed my meaning correctly," said she; "meanwhile I must write to her not to come here. Shall I say that we will be in Florence in a day or two?"

"I was just thinking of those Serravezza springs," said Upton; "they contain a bichloride of potash, which Staub in his treatise says, 'is the element wanting in all nervous organizations.'"

"But remember the season—we are in midwinter—the hotels are closed."

"The springs are running, Princess; 'the earth,' as Moschus says, 'is a mother that never ceases to nourish.' I do suspect I need a little nursing."

The Princess understood him thoroughly. She well knew that whenever the affairs of Europe followed an unbroken track, without any thing eventful or interesting, Sir Horace fell back upon his maladies for matter of occupation. She had, however, now occasion for his advice and counsel, and by no means concurred in his plan of spending some days, if not weeks, in the dreary mountain solitudes of Serravezza. "You must certainly consult Lanotti before you venture on these waters," said she; "they are highly dangerous if taken without the greatest circumspection;" and she gave a catalogue of imaginary calamities which had befallen various illustrious and gifted individuals, to which Upton listened with profound attention.

"Very well," sighed he, as she finished. "It must be as you say. I'll see Lanotti, for I cannot afford to die just yet. That 'Greek question' will have no solution without me—no one has the key of it but myself. That Panslavic scheme, too, in the Principalities, attracts no notice but mine; and as to Spain, the policy I have devised for that country requires all the watchfulness I can bestow on it. No, Princess," here he gave a melancholy sigh, "we must not die at this moment. There are just four men in Europe—I doubt if it could get on with three."

"What proportion do you admit as to the other sex?" said she, laughing.

"I only know of *one*, Madame," and he kissed her hand with gallantry; "and now for Florence, if you will."

It is by no means improbable that our readers have a right to some apology at our hands, for the habit we have indulged of lingering along with the two individuals whose sayings and doings are not directly essential to our tale; but is not the story of every-day life our guarantee that incidents and people cross and re-cross the path we

are going; attracting our attention, engaging our sympathy, enlisting our energies, even in our most anxious periods? Such is the world; and we cannot venture out of reality. Besides this, we are disposed to think that the moral of a tale is often more effectively conveyed by the characters than by the catastrophe of a story. The strange discordant tones of the human heart, blending with melody the purest, sounds of passionate rancor, are in themselves more powerful lessons than all the records of rewarded virtue and all the calendars of punished vice. The nature of a single man can be far more instructive than the history of every accident that befalls him.

It is then with regret that we leave the Princess and Sir Horace to pursue their journey alone. We confess a liking for their society, and would often as soon loiter in the by-paths that they follow, as journey in the more recognized high-road of our true history. Not having the same conviction that our sympathy is shared by our readers, we again return to the fortunes of Glencore.

While Lord Glencore's carriage underwent the usual scrutiny exercised towards travellers at the gate of Florence, and prying officials poked their lanterns in every quarter in all the security of their "caste," two foot travellers were rudely pushed aside to await the time till the pretentious equipage passed on. They were foreigners; and their effects, which they carried in knapsacks, required examination.

"We have come a long way on foot to-day," said the younger, in a tone that indicated nothing of one asking a favor. "Can't we have this search made at once?"

"Whisht—whisht," whispered his companion in English. "Wait till the Prince moves on, and be polite with them all."

"I am seeking for nothing in the shape of compliment," said the other; "there is no reason why, because I am on foot, I must be detained for this man."

Again the other remonstrated and suggested patience.

"What are you grumbling about, young fellow?" cried one of the officers; "do you fancy yourself of the same consequence as *mi Lordo*? And see, he must wait his time here."

"We came a good way on foot to-day, sir," interposed the elder, eagerly, taking the reply on himself, "and we're tired and weary, and would be deeply obliged if you'd examine us as soon as you could."

"Stand aside and wait your turn," was the stern response.

"You almost deserve the fellow's insolence, Billy," said the youth; "a crown



piece in his hand had been far more intelligible than your appeal to his pity," and he threw himself wearily down on a stone bench.

Aroused by the accent of his own language, Lord Glencore sat up in his carriage, and leaned out to catch sight of the speaker, but the shadow of the overhanging roof concealed him from view. "Can't you suffer those two poor fellows to move on?" whispered his Lordship, as he placed a piece of money in the officer's hand; "they look tired and jaded."

"There, thank his Excellency for his kindness to you, and go your way," muttered the officer to Billy, who, without well understanding the words, drew nigh the window; but the glass was already drawn up, the postilions were once more in their saddles, and away dashed the cumbrous carriage in all the noise and uproar that is deemed the proper tribute to rank.

The youth heard that they were free to proceed, with a half-dogged indifference, and throwing his knapsack on his shoulders, moved away.

"I asked them if they knew of one of her name in the city, and they said 'No,'" said the elder.

"But they so easily mistake names—how did you call her?"

"I said Harley—La Signora Harley," rejoined the other; "and they were positive she was not here. They never heard of her."

"Well, we shall know soon," sighed the youth, heavily. "Is not this an inn, Billy?"

"Ay is it, but not one for our purpose—it's like a palace. They told me of the Leone d'Oro as a quiet place and a cheap."

"I don't care where or what it be; one day and night here will do all I want, and then for Genoa, Billy, and the sea, and the world beyond the sea," said the youth, with increasing animation. "You shall see what a different fellow I'll be when I throw behind me forever the traditions of this dreary life here."

"I know well the good stuff that's in ye," said the other, affectionately.

"Ay. But you don't know that I have energy as well as pride," said the other.

"There's nothing beyond your reach if you want to get it," said he again, in the same voice.

"You're an arrant flatterer, old boy," cried the youth, throwing his arm around him; "but I would not have you otherwise for the world. There is a happiness even in the self-deception of your praise that I could not deny myself."

Thus chatting, they arrived at the humble

door of the Leone d'Oro, where they installed themselves for the night. It was a house frequented by couriers and vetturini, and at the common table for this company they now took their places for supper. The Carnival was just drawing to its close, and all the gayeties of that merry season were going forward. Nothing was talked of but the brilliant festivities of the city, the splendid balls of the court, and the magnificent receptions in the houses of the nobility.

"The Palazzo della Torre takes the lead of all," said one. "There were upwards of three thousand masks there this evening, I'm told, and the gardens were just as full as the salons."

"She is rich enough to afford it well," cried another. "I counted twenty servants in white and gold liveries on the stairs alone."

"Were you there, then?" asked the youth, whom we may at once call by his name of Massy.

"Yes, sir; a mask and a domino, such as you see yonder, are passports everywhere for the next twenty-four hours; and though I'm only a courier, I have been chatting with duchesses, and exchanging smart sayings with countesses in almost every great house in Florence this evening. The Perzola theatre, too, is open, and all the boxes crowded with visitors."

"You are a stranger, as I detect by your accent," said another, "and you ought to have a look at a scene such as you'll never witness in your own land."

"What would come of such freedoms with us, Billy?" whispered Massy; "would our great lords tolerate, even for a few hours, the association with honest fellows of this stamp?"

"There would be danger in the attempt, any how," said Billy.

"What calumnies would be circulated—what slanderous tales would be sent abroad under cover of this secrecy. How many a coward-stab would be given in the shadow of that immunity. For one who would use the privilege for mere amusement, how many would turn it to account for private vengeance."

"Are you quite certain such accidents do not occur here?"

"That society tolerates the custom is the best answer to this. There may be, for aught we know, many a cruel vengeance executed under favor of this secrecy. Many may cover their faces to unmask their hearts, but after all they continue to observe a habit which centuries back their forefathers followed; and the inference fairly is, that it is not baneful. For my own part, I am glad to have an opportunity of witnessing this

Saturnalia, and to-morrow I'll buy a mask and a domino, Billy, and so shall you, too. Why should we not have a day's fooling like the rest?"

Billy shook his head and laughed, and they soon afterwards parted for the night.

While young Massy slept soundly, not a dream disturbing the calmness of his rest, Lord Glencore passed the night in a state of feverish excitement. Led on by some strange mysterious influence, which he could as little account for as resist, he had come back to the city where the fatal incident of his life had occurred. With what purpose he could not tell. It was not, indeed, that he had no object in view. It was rather that he had so many and conflicting ones, that they marred and destroyed each other. No longer under the guidance of calm reason, his head wandered from the past to the present and the future, disturbed by passion and excited by injured self-love. At one moment, sentiments of sorrow and shame would take the ascendant; and at the next, a vindictive anger to follow out his vengeance and witness the ruin that he had accomplished. The unbroken, unrelieved pressure of one thought, for years and years of time, had at last undermined his reasoning powers, and every attempt at calm judgment or reflection was sure to be attended with some violent paroxysm of irrepressible rage.

There are men in whom the combative element is so strong that it usurps all their guidance, and when once they are enlisted in a contest, they cannot desist till the struggle be decided for or against them. Such was Glencore. To discover that the terrible injury he had inflicted on his wife had not crushed her nor driven her with shame from the world, aroused once more all the vindictive passions of his nature. It was a defiance he could not withstand. Guilty or innocent, it mattered not; she had braved him, at least so he was told, and as such he had come to see her with his own eyes. If this was the thought which predominated in his mind, others there were that had their passing power over him—moments of tenderness, moments in which the long past came back again, full of softening memories, and then he would burst into tears and cry bitterly.

If he ventured to project any plan for reconciliation with her he had so cruelly wronged, he as suddenly bethought him that her spirit was not less high and haughty than his own. She had, so far as he could learn, never quailed before his vengeance; how, then, might he suppose, would she act in the presence of his avowed injustice? Was it not, besides, too late to repair the wrong? Even for his boy's sake, would it

not be better if he inherited sufficient means to support an honorable life, unknown and unnoticed, than bequeath to him a name so associated with shame and sorrow? "Who can tell," he would cry aloud, "what my harsh treatment may not have made him? What resentment may have taken root in his young heart? What distrust may have eaten into his nature? If I could but see him and talk with him as a stranger. If I could be able to judge him apart from the influences that my own feelings would create. Even then—what would it avail me? I have so sullied and tarnished a proud name, that he could never bear it without reproach. Who is this Lord Glencore? people would say. What is the strange story of his birth? Has any one yet got at the truth? Was the father the cruel tyrant or the mother the worthless creature we hear tell of? Is he even legitimate, and if so, why does he walk apart from his equals, and live without recognition by his order? This is the noble heritage I am to leave him—this the proud position to which he is to succeed. And yet Upton says that the boy's rights are inalienable; that, think how I may, do what I will, the day on which I die he is the rightful Lord Glencore. His claim may lie dormant, the proofs may be buried, but that, in truth and fact, he will be what all my subterfuge and all my falsehood cannot deny him. And, then, if the day should come that he asserts his right—if, by some of those wonderful accidents that reveal the mysteries of the world, he should succeed to prove his claim—what a memory will he cherish of me. Will not every sorrow of his youth, every indignity of his manhood, be associated with my name? Will he or can he ever forgive him who defamed the mother and despoiled the son?"

In the terrible conflict of such thoughts as these, he passed the night; intervals of violent grief or passion alone breaking the sad connection of such reflections, till at length the worn-out faculties, incapable of further exercise, wandered away into incoherency, and he raved in all the wildness of insanity.

It was thus that Upton found him on his arrival.

#### CHAPTER LII.

##### MAJOR SCARESEY'S VISIT.

Down the crowded thoroughfare of the Borgo d'Ognisanti the tide of carnival mummers poured unceasingly. Hideous masks and gay dominoes, ludicrous impersonations, and absurd satires on costumes abounded, and the entire population seemed to have given themselves up to merriment,



and were fooling it to the top o' their bent. Bands of music and chorus singers from the theatre filled the air with their loud strains, and carriages crowded with fantastic figures moved past, pelting the bystanders with mock sweetmeats, and covering them with showers of flour. It was a season of universal license, and, short of actual outrage, all was permitted for the time. Nor did the enjoyment of the scene seem to be confined to the poorer classes of the people, who thus for the nonce assumed equality with their richer neighbors; but all, even to the very highest, mixed in the wild excitement of the pageant, and took the rough treatment they met with in perfect good humor. Dukes and princes, white from head to foot with the snowy shower, went laughingly along, and grave dignitaries were fain to walk arm in arm with the most ludicrous monstrosities, whose gestures turned on them the laughter of all around. Occasionally, but it must be owned, rarely, some philosopher of a sterner school might be seen passing hurriedly along, his severe features and contemptuous glances owing to little sympathy with the mummery about him; but even he had to compromise his proud disdain, and escape, as best he might, from the indiscriminate justice of the crowd. To detect one of this stamp, to follow and turn upon him the full tide of popular fury, seemed to be the greatest triumph of the scene. When such a victim presented himself, all joined in the pursuit: nuns embraced, devils environed him, angels perched on his shoulders, mock wild boars rushed between his legs; his hat was decorated with feathers, his clothes inundated with showers of meal or flour; hackney coachmen, dressed as ladies, fainted in his arms, and semi-naked bacchanals pressed drink to his lips. In a word, each contributed what he might of attention to the luckless individual, whose resistance—if he were so impolitic as to make any—only increased the zest of the persecution.

An instance of this kind had now attracted general attention, nor was the amusement diminished by the discovery that he was a foreigner, an Englishman. Impertinent allusions to his nation, absurd attempts at his language, ludicrous travesties of what were supposed to be his native customs, were showered on him, in company with a hail storm of mock bonbons and lime-pellets; till, covered with powder, and outraged beyond all endurance, he fought his way into the entrance of the *Hôtel d'Italie*, followed by the cries and laughter of the populace.

"Cursed tom-foolery! confounded asses!" cried he, as he found himself in a harbor of

refuge. "What the devil fun can they discover in making each other dirtier than their daily habits bespeak them? I say," cried he, addressing a waiter, "is Sir Horace Upton staying here? Well, will you say, Major Scaresby—be correct in the name—Major Scaresby requests to pay his respects."

"His Excellency will see you, Sir," said the man, returning quickly with the reply.

From the end of a room, so darkened by closed shutters and curtains as to make all approach difficult, a weak voice called out: "Ah, Scaresby, how d'ye yo? I was just thinking to myself that I couldn't be in Florence since I had not yet seen you!"

"You are too good, too kind, Sir Horace, to say so," said the other, with a voice whose tones by no means corresponded with the words.

"Yes, Scaresby; every thing in this good city is in a manner associated with your name. Its intrigues, its quarrels, its loves and jealousies; its mysteries, in fine, have had no such interpreter as yourself within the memory of man! What a pity there were no Scaresbys in the Cinquecento! How sad there were none of your family here in the Medicean period; what a picture might we then have had of a society, fuller even than the present of moral delinquencies." There was a degree of pomposity in the manner he uttered this that served to conceal in a great measure its impertinence.

"I am much flattered to learn that I have ever enlightened your Excellency on any subject," said the Major, drily.

"That you have, Scaresby. I was a mere dabbler in moral toxicology when I heard your first lecture, and, I assure you, I was struck by your knowledge. And how is the dear city doing?"

"It is masquerading to-day," said Scaresby, "and, consequently, far more natural than at any other period of the whole year. Smeared faces and dirty finery—exactly its suitable wear!"

"Who are here, Major? Any one that one knows?"

"Old Millington is here."

"The Marquis?"

"Yes, he's here, fresh painted and lacquered; his eyes twinkling with a mock lustre that makes him look like an old po'chaise with a pair of new lamps!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" laughed Sir Horace, encouragingly.

"And then—there's Mabworth."

"Sir Paul Mabworth?"

"Ay, the same old bore as ever! He has got off one of Burke's speeches on the India Bill by heart, and says that he spoke

it on the question of the grant for Maynooth. O, if poor Burke could only look up."

"Look down! you ought to say, Scaresby; depend upon't he's not on the opposition benches still!"

"I hate the fellow," said Scaresby, whose ill temper was always augmented by any attempted smartness of those he conversed with. "He has taken Walmsley's cook away from him, and never gives any one a dinner."

"That is shameful—a perfect dog in the manger!"

"Worse; he's a dog without any manger! For he keeps his house on board-wages, and there's literally nothing to eat! That poor thing, Strejowsky."

"O, Olga Strejowsky, do you mean? What of her?"

"Why,—there's another husband just turned up. They thought he was killed in the Caucasus, but he was only passing a few years in Siberia; and so he has come back; and claims all the emeralds. You remember, of course, that famous necklace, and the great drops! They belonged once to the Empress Catherine, but Mabworth says that he took the concern with all its dependencies; he'll give up his bargain, but make no compromise."

"She's growing old, I fancy."

"She's younger than the Sabloukoff by five good years, and they tell me *she* plays Beauty to this hour."

"Ah, Scaresby, had you known what words were these you have just uttered, or had you only seen the face of him who heard them, you had rather bitten your tongue off, than suffered it to fashion them!"

"Briegmolles danced with her, at that celebrated fête given by the Prince of Orleans something like eight and thirty years ago."

"And how is the dear Duke?" asked Upton, sharply.

"Just as you saw him at the Court of Louis the Eighteenth; he swaggers a little more as he gets more feeble about the legs, and he shows his teeth when he laughs, more decidedly since his last journey to Paris. Devilish clever fellows these modern dentists are! He wants to marry; I suppose you've heard it."

"Not a word of it. Who is the happy fair?"

"The Nina, as they call her now. She was one of the Della Torres, who married, or didn't marry, Glencore. Don't you remember him? He was Colonel of the 11th, and a devil of a martinet he was."

"I remember him," said Upton, drily.

"Well, he ran off with one of those girls,

and some say they were married at Capri; as if it signified what happened at Capri! She was a deuced good-looking girl at the time—a coquette, you know—and Glencore was one of those stiff English fellows, that think every man is making up to his wife; he drank besides."

"No, pardon me, there you are mistaken. I knew him intimately; Glencore was as temperate as myself."

"I have it from Lowther, who used to take him home at night; *he* said, Glencore never went to bed sober! At all events, she hated him, and detested his miserly habits."

"Another mistake, my dear Major. Glencore was never what is called a rich man, but he was always a generous one!"

"I suppose you'll not deny that he used to thrash her? Ay, and with a horsewhip, too!"

"Come, come, Scaresby, this is really too coarse for mere jesting."

"Jest? By Jove, it was very bitter earnest. She told Briegmolles all about it. I'm not sure she didn't show him the marks."

"Take my word for it, Scaresby," said Upton, dropping his voice to a low but measured tone, "this is a base calumny, and the Duke of Briegmolles no more circulated such a story than I did. He is a man of honor, and utterly incapable of it."

"I can only repeat that I believe it to be perfectly true!" said Scaresby, calmly.

"Nobody here ever doubted the story."

"I cannot say what measure of charity accompanies your zeal for truth in this amiable society, Scaresby, but I can repeat my assertion that this must be a falsehood."

"You will find it very hard, nevertheless, to bring any one over to your opinion," retorted the unappeasable Major. "He was a fellow everybody hated; proud and supercilious to all, and treated his wife's relations—who were of far better blood than himself—as though they were 'canaille.'"

A loud crash, as if of something heavy having fallen, here interrupted their colloquy, and Upton sprang from his seat and hastened into the adjoining room. Close beside the door—so close that he almost fell over it in entering—lay the figure of Lord Glencore. In his efforts to reach the door he had fainted, and there he lay—a cold, clammy sweat covering his livid features, and his bloodless lips slightly parted.

It was almost an hour ere his consciousness returned; but when it did, and when he saw Upton alone at his bedside, he pressed his hand within his own, and said: "I heard it all, Upton, every word! I tried to reach the room; I got up from bed—and was already at the door—when my brain



reeled, and my heart grew faint. It may have been malady, it might be passion—I know not—but I saw no more. He is gone,—is he not?" cried he in a faint whisper.

"Yes, yes—an hour ago; but you will think nothing of what he said, when I tell you his name. It was Scaresby, Major Scaresby; one whose bad tongue is the one solitary claim by which he subsists in a society of slanderers!"

"And he is gone!" repeated the other, in a tone of deep despondency.

"Of course he is. I never saw him since; but be assured of what I have just told you, that his libels carry no reproach. He is a calumniator by temperament."

"I'd have shot him, if I could have opened the door," muttered Glencore, between his teeth, but Upton heard the words distinctly. "What am I to this man," cried he aloud, "or he to me, that I am to be arraigned by him on charges of any kind, true or false? What accident of fortune makes him my judge? Tell me that, sir. Who has appealed to him for protection? Who has demanded to be righted at his hand?"

"Will you not hear me, Glencore, when I say that his slanders have no sting? In the circles wherein he mixes, it is the mere scandal that amuses; for its veracity, there is not one that cares! You, or I, or some one else, supply the name of an actor in a disreputable drama; the plot of which alone interests, not the performer."

"And am I to sit tamely down under this degradation?" exclaimed Glencore, passionately. "I have never subscribed to this dictation. There is little indeed of life left to me, but there is enough perhaps to vindicate myself against men of this stamp. You shall bring him a message from me; you shall tell him by what accident I overheard his discoveries."

"My dear Glencore, there are graver interests, far worthier cares than any this man's name can enter into, which should now engage you."

"I say he shall have my provocation, and that within an hour!" cried Glencore, wildly.

"You would give this man and his words a consequence that neither have ever possessed," said Upton, in a mild and subdued tone. "Remember, Glencore, when I left with you this morning that paper of Stubber's, it was with a distinct understanding that other and wiser thoughts than those of vengeance were to occupy your attention. I never scrupled to place it in your hands; I never hesitated about confiding to you what in lawyer's phrase would be a proof against you. When an act of justice was to be

done, I would not stain it by the faintest shadow of coercion. I left you free, I leave you still free, from every thing but the dictates of your own honor."

Glencore made no reply, but the conflict of his thoughts seemed to agitate him greatly.

"The man who has pursued a false path in life," said Upton, calmly, "has need of much courage to retrace his steps; but courage is not the quality you fail in, Glencore, so that I appeal to you with confidence."

"I have need of courage," muttered Glencore; "you say truly. What was it the doctor said this morning—aneurism?"

Upton moved his head with an inclination barely perceptible.

"What a Nemesis there is in nature," said Glencore, with a sickly attempt to smile, "that passion should beget malady! I never knew, physically speaking, that I had a heart—till it was broken. So that," resumed he in a more agreeable tone, "death may ensue at any moment—on the least excitement?"

"He warned you gravely on that point," said Upton, cautiously.

"How strange that I should have come through that trial of an hour ago. It was not that the struggle did not move me. I could have torn that fellow limb from limb, Upton, if I had but the strength! But see," cried he, feebly, "what a poor wretch I am; I cannot close these fingers!" and he held out a worn and clammy hand as he spoke. "Do with me as you will," said he, after a pause; "I should have followed your counsels long ago!"

Upton was too subtle an anatomist of human motives to venture by even the slightest word to disturb a train of thought, which any interference could only damage. As the other still continued to meditate, and, by his manner and look, in a calmer and more reflective spirit, the wily diplomatist moved noiselessly away, and left him alone.

#### CHAPTER XLII.

##### A MASK IN CARNIVAL TIME.

FROM the gorgeous halls of the Pitti Palace down to the humblest chamber in Canaldole, Florence was a scene of rejoicing. As night closed in, the crowds seemed only to increase, and the din and clamor to grow louder. It seemed as though festivity and joy had overflowed from the houses, filling the streets with merry maskers. In the clear cold air, groups feasted, and sung, and danced, all mingling and intermixing with a freedom that showed how thoroughly the spirit of pleasure-seeking can annihilate the distinctions of class. The soiled and tattered

nummer leaned over the carriage-door, and exchanged compliments with the masked duchess within. The titled noble of a dozen quarterings stopped to pledge a merry company who pressed him to drain a glass of Monte Pulciano with them. There was a perfect fellowship between those whom fortune had so widely separated, and the polished accents of high society were heard to blend with the quaint and racy expressions of the "people."

Theatres and palaces lay open, all lighted *a giorno*. The whole population of the city surged and swayed to and fro like a mighty sea in motion, making the air resound the while with a wild mixture of sounds, wherein music and laughter were blended. Amid the orgie, however, not an act, not a word of rudeness disturbed the general content. It was a season of universal joy, and none dared to destroy the spell of pleasure that presided.

Our task is not to follow the princely equipages as they rolled in unceasing tides within the marble courts, nor yet to track the strong flood that poured through the wide thoroughfares in all the wildest exuberance of their joy. Our business is with two travellers, who, well weary of being for hours a-foot, and partly sated with pleasure, sat down to rest themselves on a bench beside the Arno.

"It is glorious fooling, that must be said, Billy," said Charles Massy, "and the spirit is most contagious. How little have you or I in common with these people. We scarce can catch the accents of the droll allusions, we cannot follow the strains of the rude songs, and yet we are carried away like the rest to feel a wild enjoyment in all this din and glitter and movement. How well they do it, too."

"Thruly by rayson of concentration," said Billy, gravely. "They are highly charged with fun. The ould adage says, 'Non semper sunt Saturnalia—It is not every day Morris kills a cow!'"

"Yet it is by this very habit of enjoyment that they know how to be happy."

"To be sure it is," cried Billy; "*they* have a ritual for it which *we* haven't; as Cicero tells us, 'In jucundis nullum periculum.' But ye see we have no notion of any amusement without a dash of danger through it, if not even cruelty!"

"The French know how to reconcile the two natures; they are brave and light-hearted too."

"And the Irish, Mister Charles—the Irish especially," said Billy, proudly, "for I was alludin' to the English in what I said last. The 'versatile ingenium' is all our own."

"He goes into a tent and he spends half-a-crown,

Comes out, meets a friend, and for love knocks him down."

"There's an elegant philosophy in that, now, that a Saxon would never see! For it is out of the very fullness of the heart, ye may remark, that Pat does this, just as much as to say, 'I don't care for the expense!' He smashes a skull just as he would a whole dresser of crockery ware! There's something very grand in that recklessness."

The tone of the remark and a certain wild energy of his manner, showed that poor Billy's faculties were slightly under the influences of the Tuscan grape, and the youth smiled at sight of an excess so rare.

"How hard it must be," said Massy, "to go back to the work-a-day routine of life after one of these outbursts; to resume not alone the drudgery but all the slavish observances that humble men yield to great ones."

"'Tis what Bacon says, 'There's nothing so hard as unlearnin' any thing,' and the proof is, how few of us ever do it! We always go on mixin' old thoughts with new—puttin' different kinds of wine in the same glass, and then wonderin' we are not invigorated!"

"You're in a mood for moralizing to-night, I see, Billy," said the other, smiling. "The levities of life always put me on that thrack, just as a dark cloudy day reminds me to take out an umbrella with me."

"Yet I do not see that all your observation of the world has indisposed you to enjoy it, or that you take harsher views of life the closer you look at it."

"Quite the reverse; the more I see of mankind the more I'm struck with the fact that the very wickedest and worst can't get rid of remorse! 'Tis something out of a man's nature entirely—something that dwells outside of him—sets him on to commit a crime; and then he begins to rayson and dispute with the temptation, just like one keepin' bad company, and listenin' to impure notions and evil suggestions, day after day; as he does this, he gets to have a taste for that kind of low society, I mane with his own bad thoughts, till at last every other ceases to amuse him. Look, what's that there—where are they goin' with all the torches there?" cried he, suddenly, springing up and pointing to a dense crowd that passed along the street. It was a band of music dressed in a quaint mediæval costume, on its way to serenade some palace.

"Let us follow and listen to them, Billy,"



said the youth; and they arose and joined the throng.

Following in the wake of the dense mass, they at last reached the gates of a great palace, and after some waiting gained access to the spacious court-yard. The grim old statues and armorial bearings shone in the glare of a hundred torches, and the deep echoes rung with the brazen voices of the band, as pent up within the quadrangle the din of a large orchestra arose. On a great terrace over-head, numerous figures were grouped—indistinctly seen from the light of the salons within—but whose mysterious movements completed the charm of a very interesting picture.

Some wrapped in shawls to shroud them from the night air, some less cautiously emerging from the rooms within, leaned over the marble balustrade and showed their jewelled arms in the dim hazy light, while around and about them gay uniforms and rich costumes abounded. As Billy gave himself up to the excitement of the music, young Massy, more interested by the aspect of the scene, gazed unceasingly at the balcony. There was just that shadowy indistinctness in the whole that invested it with a kind of romantic interest, and he could recall stories and incidents from those whose figures passed and repassed before him. He fancied that in their gestures he could trace many meanings, and, as the bent down heads approached and hands touched, he fashioned many a tale in his own mind of moving fortunes.

"And see, she comes again to that same dark angle of the terrace," muttered he to himself, as, shrouded in a large mantle and with a half mask on her features, a tall and graceful figure passed into the place he spoke of. "She looks like one among but not of them; how much of heart-weariness is there in that attitude; how full is it of sad and tender melancholy—would that I could see her face! My life on't that it is beautiful! There, she is tearing up her bouquet; leaf by leaf the rose-leaves are falling, as though one by one hopes are decaying in her heart." He pushed his way through the dense throng till he gained a corner of the court where a few leaves and flower-stems yet strewed the ground; carefully gathering up these, he crushed them in his hand and seemed to feel as though a nearer tie bound him to the fair unknown. How little ministers to the hope—how infinitely less again will feed the imagination of a young heart.

Between them now there was to his appreciation some mysterious link. "Yes," said he to himself, "true, I stand unknown, unnoticed, yet it is to me of all the thousands here she could reveal what is passing in that

heart! I know it, I feel it! She has a sorrow whose burthen I might help to bear. There is cruelty, or treachery, or falsehood, arrayed against her, and through all the splendor of the scene—all the wild gayety of the orgie—some spectral image never leaves her side! I would stake existence on it that I have read her aright!"

Of all the intoxications that can entrance the human faculties, there is none so maddening as that produced by giving full sway to an exuberant imagination. The bewilderment resists every effort of reason, and in its onward course carries away its victims with all the force of a mountain torrent. A winding-stair long unused and partly dilapidated led to the end of the terrace where she stood, and Massy, yielding to some strange impulse, slowly and noiselessly crept up this till he had gained a spot only a few yards removed from her. The dark shadow of the building almost completely concealed his figure, and left him free to contemplate her unnoticed.

Some event of interest within had withdrawn all from the terrace save herself, the whole balcony was suddenly deserted, and she alone remained, to all seeming lost to the scene around her. It was then that she removed her mask, and, suffering it to fall back on her neck, rested her head pensively on her hand. Massy bent over eagerly to try and catch sight of her face; the effort he made startled her, she looked round, and he cried out: "Ida—Ida! My heart could not deceive me!" In another instant he had climbed the balcony and was beside her.

"I thought we had parted forever, Sebastian," said she; "you told me so on the last night at Massa."

"And so I meant when I said it," cried he, "nor is our meeting now of my planning. I came to Florence, it is true, to see, but not to speak with you, ere I left Europe forever. For three entire days I have searched the city to discover where you lived, and chance—I have no better name for it—chance has led me hither."

"It is an unkind fortune that has made us to meet again," said she, in a voice of deep melancholy.

"I have never known fortune in any other mood," said he, fiercely. "When clouds show me the edge of their silver linings, I only prepare myself for storm and hurricane."

"I know you have endured much," said she, in a voice of deeper sadness.

"You know but little of what I have endured," rejoined he, sternly. "You saw me taunted indeed with my humble calling, insulted for my low birth, expelled ignominiously from a house where my presence had

been sought for, and yet all these, grievous enough, are little to other acts that I have had to bear."

"By what unhappy accident, what mischance, have you made *her* your enemy, Sebastian? She would not even suffer me to speak of you. She went so far as to tell me that there was a reason for the dislike, one which, if she could reveal, I would never question."

"How can I tell?" cried he, angrily. "I was born I suppose under an evil star, for nothing prospers with me."

"But can you even guess her reasons?" said she, eagerly.

"No, except it be the presumption of one in my condition daring to aspire to one in *yours*, and that, as the world goes, would be reason enough. It is probable, too, that I did not state these pretensions of mine over delicately. I told her, with a frankness that was not quite acceptable, I was one who could not speak of birth or blood. She did not like the coarse word I applied to myself, and I will not repeat it; and she ventured to suggest that, had there not appeared some ambiguity in her own position, I could never have so far forgotten my own as to advance such pretensions——"

"Well, and then?" cried the girl, eagerly.

"Well, and then," said he, deliberately, "I told her I had heard rumors of the kind she alluded to, but to *me* they carried no significance; that it was for *you* I cared. The accidents of life around you had no influence on my choice; you might be all that the greatest wealth and highest blood could make you, or as poor and ignoble as myself, without any change in my affections. 'These,' said she, 'are the insulting promptings of that English breeding which you say has mixed with your blood, and if for no other cause would make me distrust you.'

"'Stained as it may be,' said I, 'that same English blood is the best pride I possess.' She grew pale with passion as I said this, but never spoke a word; and there we stood, staring haughtily at each other, till she pointed to the door, and so I left her. And now, Ida, who is she that treats me thus disdainfully? I ask you not in anger, for I know too well how the world regards such as me to presume to question its harsh injustice. But tell me, I beseech you, that she is one to whose station these prejudices are the fitting accompaniments, and let me feel that it is less myself as the individual that she wrongs, than the class I belong to is that which she despises. I can better bear this contumely when I know that it is an instinct."

"If birth and blood can justify a prejudice, a princess of the house of Della Torre

might claim the privilege," said the girl, haughtily. "No family of the north, at least, will dispute with our own in lineage; but there are other causes which may warrant all that she feels towards you even more strongly, Sebastian. This boast of your English origin, this it is which has doubtless injured you in her esteem. Too much reason has she had to cherish the antipathy! Betrayed into a secret marriage by an Englishman, who represented himself as of a race noble as her own, she was deserted and abandoned by him afterwards. This is the terrible mystery which I never dared to tell you, and which led us to a life of seclusion at Massa. This is the source of that hatred towards all of a nation which she must ever associate with the greatest misfortunes of her life! And from this unhappy event was she led to make me take that solemn oath that I spoke of, never to link my fortunes with one of that hated land."

"But you told me that you had not made the pledge," said he, wildly.

"Nor had I then, Sebastian; but since we last met, worked on by solicitation, I could not resist, tortured by a narrative of such sorrows as I never listened to before. I yielded and gave my promise."

"It matters little to *me*!" said he, gloomily; "a barrier the more or the less can be of slight moment when there rolls a wide sea between us! Had you ever loved me, such a pledge had been impossible."

"It was you yourself, Sebastian, told me we were never to meet again," rejoined she.

"Better that we had never done so!" muttered he. "Nay, perhaps I am wrong," added he, fiercely; "this meeting may serve to mark how little there ever was between us!"

"Is this cruelty affected, Sebastian, or is it real?"

"It cannot be cruel to echo your own words. Besides," said he, with an air of mockery in the words, "she who lives in this gorgeous palace, surrounded with all the splendors of life, can have little complaint to make against the cruelty of fortune."

"How unlike yourself is all this!" cried she. "You, of all I have ever seen or known, understood how to rise above the accidents of fate, placing your happiness and your ambitions in a sphere where mere questions of wealth never entered. What can have so changed you?"

Before he could reply, a sudden movement in the crowd attracted the attention of both, and a number of persons who had filled the terrace now passed hurriedly into the salons, where, to judge from the commotion, an event of some importance had occurred. Ida lost not a moment in entering, when she



was met by the tidings—"It is she, Nina herself, is ill; some mask, a stranger it would seem, has said something or threatened something." In fact, she had been carried to her room in strong convulsions, and while some were in search of medical aid for her, others, not less eagerly, were endeavoring to detect the delinquent.

From the gay and brilliant picture of festivity which was presented but a few minutes back, what a change now came over the scene! Many hurried away at once, shocked at even a momentary shadow on the sunny road of their existence; others as anxiously pressed on to recount the incident elsewhere; some, again, moved by curiosity or some better prompting, exerted themselves to investigate what amounted to a gross violation of the etiquette of a carnival; and thus, in the salons, on the stairs, and in the court itself, the bustle and confusion prevailed. At length some suggested that the gate of the palace should be closed, and none suffered to depart without unmasking. The motion was at once adopted, and a small knot of persons, the friends of the Countess, assumed the task of the scrutiny.

Despite complaints and remonstrances as to the inconvenience and the delay thus occasioned, they examined every carriage as it passed out. None, however, but faces familiar to the Florentine world were to be met with; the well-known of every ball and fete were there, and if a stranger presented himself, he was sure to be one for whom some acquaintance could bear testimony.

At a fire in one of the smaller salons, stood a small group, of which the Duc de Briognolles and Major Scaresby formed a part. Sentiments of a very different order had detained these two individuals, and while the former was deeply moved by the insult offered to the Countess, the latter felt an intense desire to probe the circumstance to the bottom.

"Devilish odd it is," cried Scaresby; "here we have been this last hour and a half turning a whole house out of the windows, and yet there's no one to tell us what it's all for, what it's all about!"

"Pardon, Monsieur," said the Duke, severely. "We know that a lady whose hospitality we have been accepting has retired from her company insulted. It is very clearly our duty that this should not pass unpunished."

"Oughtn't we to have some clearer insight into what constituted the insult? It may have been a practical joke—a 'mauvaise plaisanterie,' Duke."

"We have no claims to any confidence not extended to us, sir," said the French-

man. "To me it is quite sufficient that the Countess feels aggrieved."

"Not but we shall cut an absurd figure to-morrow, when we own that we don't know what we were so indignant about."

"Only so many of us as have characters for the 'latest intelligence.'"

To this sally there succeeded a somewhat awkward pause, Scaresby occupying himself with thoughts of some perfectly safe vengeance.

"I shouldn't wonder if it was that Count Marsano—that fellow who used to be about the Nina long ago—come back again. He was at Como this summer, and made many inquiries after his old love!"

A most insulting stare of defiance was the only reply the old Duke could make to what he would have been delighted to resent as a personal affront.

"Marsano is a 'mauvais drole,'" said a Russian; "and if a woman slighted him, or he suspected that she did, he's the very man to execute a vengeance of the kind."

"I should apply a harsher epithet to a man capable of such conduct," said the Duke.

"He'd not take it patiently, Duke," said the other.

"It is precisely in that hope, sir, that I should employ it," said the Duke.

Again was the conversation assuming a critical turn, and again an interval of ominous silence succeeded.

"There is but one carriage now in the court, your Excellency," said a servant addressing the Duke in a low voice; "and the gentleman inside appears to be seriously ill. It might be better, perhaps, not to detain him."

"Of course not," said the Duke; "but stay, I will go down myself."

There was still a considerable number of persons on foot in the court when the Duke descended, but only one equipage remained—a hired carriage, at the open door of which a servant was standing, holding a glass of water for his master.

"Can I be of any use to your master?" said the Duke, approaching. "Is he ill?"

"I fear he has burst a blood-vessel, sir," said the man. "He is too weak to answer me."

"Who is it—what's his name?"

"I am not able to tell you, sir; I only accompanied him from the hotel."

"Let us have a doctor at once; he appears to be dying," said the Duke, as he placed his fingers on the sick man's wrist.

"Let some one go for a physician."

"There is one here," cried a voice.

"I'm a doctor," and Billy Traynor pushed his way to the spot. "Come, Master Charles, get into the coach and help me to lift him out."

Young Massy obeyed, and not without difficulty. They succeeded at last in disengaging the almost lifeless form of a man whose dark domino was perfectly saturated with fresh blood; his half mask still covered his face, and to screen his features from the vulgar gaze of the crowd, they suffered it to remain there.

Up the wide stairs and into a spacious salon they now carried the figure whose drooping head and hanging limbs gave little signs of life. They placed him on a sofa, and Traynor, with a ready hand, untied the mask and removed it. "Merciful Heavens," cried he, "it's my Lord himself!"

The youth bent down, gazed for a few seconds at the corpse-like face, and fell fainting to the floor.

"My Lord Glencore, himself!" said the Duke, who was himself an old and attached friend.

"Hush—not a word," whispered Traynor; "he's rallyin'—he's comin' to; don't utter a syllable."

Slowly and languidly the dying man raised his eyelids, and gazed at each of those around him. From their faces he turned his gaze to the chamber, viewing the walls and the ceiling, all in turn; and then, in an accent barely audible, he said, "Where am I?"

"Amongst friends, who love and will cherish you, dear Glencore," said the Duke, affectionately.

"Ah, Briegmolles—I remember you; and this—who is this?"

"Traynor, my Lord—Billy Traynor, that will never leave you while he can serve you."

"Whose tears are those upon my hand—I feel them hot and burning," said the sick man; and Billy stepped back, that the light should fall upon the figure that knelt beside him.

"Don't cry, poor fellow," said Glencore; "it must be a hard world, or you have many better and dearer friends than I could have ever been to you. Who is this?"

Billy tried, but could not answer.

"Tell him, if you know who it is; see how wild and excited it has made him," cried the Duke; for, stretching out both hands, Glencore had caught the boy's face on either side, and continued to gaze on it, in wild eagerness. "It is—it is," cried he, pressing it to his bosom, and kissing the forehead over and over again.

"Whom does he fancy it? Whom does he suspect?"

"This is—look, Briegmolles," cried the dying man, in a voice already thick with a death rattle—"this is the seventh Lord Viscount Glencore. I declare it; and now"—he fell back, and never spoke more. A single shudder shook his feeble frame, and he was dead.

\* \* \* \* \*

We have had occasion once before in this veracious history to speak of the polite oblivion Florentine society so well understands to throw over the course of events which might cloud, even for a moment, the sunny surface of its enjoyment. No people, so far as we know, have greater gifts in this way—to shroud the disagreeables of life in decent shadow, to ignore or forget them, is their grand prerogative.

Scarcely, therefore, had three weeks elapsed, than the terrible catastrophe at the Palazzo della Torre was totally consigned to the by-gones; it ceased to be thought or spoken of, and was as much matter of remote history as an incident in the times of one of the Medici. Too much interested in the future to waste time on the past, they launched into speculations as to whether the Countess would be likely to marry again; what change the late event might effect in the amount of her fortune, and how far her position in the world might be altered by the incident. He who, in the ordinary esteem of society, would have felt less acutely than his neighbors for Glencore's sad fate—Upton—was in reality deeply and sincerely affected. The traits which make a consummate man of the world—one whose prerogative is to appreciate others, and be able to guide and influence their actions—are, in truth, very high and rare gifts, and imply resources of fine sentiment, as fully as stores of intellectual wealth. Upton sorrowed over Glencore, as for one whose noble nature had been poisoned by an impetuous temper, and over whose best instincts an ungovernable self-esteem had ever held the mastery. They had been friends almost from boyhood, and the very worldliest of men can feel the bitterness of that isolation in which the "turn of life" too frequently commences. Such friendships are never made in later life. We lend our affections when young on very small security, and though it is true we are occasionally unfortunate, we do now and then make a safe investment. No men are more prone to attach an exaggerated value to early friendships than those, who, stirred by strong ambitions, and animated by high resolves, have played for the great stakes in the world's lottery. Too much immersed in the cares and contests of life to find time to contract close personal attachments, they



fall back upon the memory of school or college days to supply the want of their hearts. There is a sophistry, too, that seduces them to believe that then, at least, they were loved for what they were, for qualities of their nature, not for accidents of station, or the proud rewards of success. There is also another and a very strange element in the pleasure such memories afford. Our early attachments serve as points of departure by which we measure the distance we have travelled in life. "Ay," say we, "we were school-fellows; I remember how he took the lead of me in this or that science, how far behind he left me in such a thing, and yet look at us now!" Upton had very often to fall back upon similar recollections; neither his school nor his college life had been remarkable for distinction, but it was always perceived that every attainment he achieved was such as would be available in after life. Nor did he ever burthen himself with the tools of scholarship, while there lay within his reach stores of knowledge that might serve to contest the higher and greater prizes that he had already set before his ambition.

But let us return to himself, as alone and sorrow-struck he sat in his room of the Hotel d'Italie. Various cares and duties consequent on Glencore's death had devolved entirely upon him; his son had suddenly disappeared from Florence on the morning after the funeral, and was seen no more, and Upton was the only one who could discharge any of the necessary duties of such a moment. The very nature of the task thus imposed upon him had its own depressing influence on his mind—the gloomy pomp of death—the terrible companionship between affliction and worldliness—the tear of the mourner—the heartbroken sigh, drowned in the sharp knock of the coffin-maker. He had gone through it all, and sat moodily pondering over the future, when Madame de Sabloukoff entered.

"She's much better this morning, and I think we can go over and dine with her to-day," said she, removing her shawl and taking a seat.

He gave a little-easy smile that seemed assent, but did not speak.

"I perceive you have not opened your letters this morning," said she, turning towards the table, littered over with letters and dispatches of every size and shape. "This seems to be from the King—is that his mode of writing, 'G. R.' in the corner?"

"So it is," said Upton, faintly. "Will you be kind enough to read it for me?"

"Pavilion, Brighton.

"DEAR UPTON,—

"Let me be the first to congratulate you

on an appointment which it affords me the greatest pleasure to confirm——"

"What does he allude to?" cried she, stopping suddenly, while a slight tinge of color showed surprise, and a little displeasure, perhaps, mingled in her emotions.

"I have not the very remotest conception," said Upton, calmly. "Let us see what that large dispatch contains? it comes from the Duke of Agecombe. O," said he, with a great effort to appear as calm and unmoved as possible, "I see what it is, they have given me India!"

"India!" exclaimed she, in amazement.

"I mean, my dear Princess, they have given me the Governor Generalship."

"Which, of course, you would not accept."

"Why not, pray?"

"India! It is banishment, barbarism, isolation from all that really interests or embellishes existence—a despotism that is wanting in the only element which gives a despot dignity, that he founds or strengthens a dynasty."

"No, no, charming Princess," said he, smiling; "it is a very glorious sovereignty, with unlimited resources, and—a very handsome stipend."

"Which, therefore, you do not decline," said she, with a very peculiar smile.

"With your companionship I should call it a paradise," said he.

"And without such?"

"Such a sacrifice as one must never shrink from at the call of duty," said he, bowing profoundly.

The Princess dined that day with the Countess of Glencore, and Sir Horace Upton journeyed towards England.

#### CHAPTER LIV. AND LAST.

##### THE END.

YEARS have gone over, and once more—it is for the last time—we come back to the old castle in the West, beside the estuary of the Killerries. Neglect and ruin have made heavy inroads on it. The battlements of the great tower have fallen. Of the windows, the stormy winds of the Atlantic have left only the stone-mullions. The terrace is cumbered with loose stones and fallen masonry. Not a trace of the garden remains, save in the chance presence of some flowering plant or shrub, half choked by weeds, and wearing out a sad existence in uncared-for solitude. The entrance-gate is closely barred and fastened, but a low portal, in a side wing, lies open, entering by which we can view the dreary desolation within. The apartments once inhabited by Lord Glencore are all dismantled and empty. The wind and the rain sweep at will along the vaulted

corridors and through the deep-arched chambers. Of the damp, discolored walls and ceilings, large patches litter the floors, with fragments of stucco and carved architraves.

One small chamber, on the ground-floor, maintains a habitable aspect. Here a bed and a few articles of furniture, some kitchen utensils, and a little book-shelf, all neatly and orderly arranged, show that some one calls this a home. Sad and loney enough is it! Not a sound to break the dreary stillness, save the deep roar of the heavy sea—not a living voice, save the wild shrill cry of the osprey, as he soars above the barren cliffs! It is winter, and what desolation can be deeper or gloomier? The sea-sent mists wrap the mountains and even the Lough itself in their vapory shroud. The cold thin rain falls unceasingly; a cheerless, damp, and heavy atmosphere dwells even within doors; and the gray, half light gives a shadowy indistinctness even to objects at hand, disposing the mind to sad and dreary imaginings.

In a deep straw chair, beside the turf fire, sits a very old man, with a large square volume upon his knee. Dwarfed by nature, and shrunk by years, there is something of almost goblin semblance in the bright lustre of his dark eyes, and the rapid motions of his lips as he reads to himself half aloud. The almost wild energy of his features has survived the wear and tear of time, and, old as he is, there is about him a dash of vigor that seems to defy age. Poor Billy Traynor is now upwards of eighty, but his faculties are clear, his memory unclouded, and, like Moses, his eye not dimmed. The Three Chronicles of Loughdooner, in which he is reading, is the history of the Glencores, and contains, among its family records, many curious predictions and prophecies. The heirs of that ancient house were, from time immemorial, the sport of fortune, enduring vicissitudes without end. No reverses seemed ever too heavy to rally from—no depth of evil fate too deep for them to extricate themselves. Involved in difficulties innumerable, engaged in plots, conspiracies, luckless undertakings, abortive enterprises, still they contrived to survive all around them, and come out with, indeed, ruined fortunes and beggared estate, but still with life, and with what is the next to life itself, an unconquerable energy of character.

It was in the encouragement of these gifts that Billy now sought for what cheered the last declining years of his solitary life. His lord, as he ever called him, had been for years and years away in a distant colony, living under another name. Dwelling amongst the rough settlers of a wild remote tract, a few brief lines at long intervals

were the only tidings that assured Billy he was yet living; yet were they enough to convince him, coupled with the hereditary traits of his house, that some one day or other he would come back again to resume his proud place and the noble name of his ancestors. More than once had it been the fate of the Glencores to see "the hearth cold, and the roof-tree blackened;" and Billy now muttered the lines of an old chronicle, where such a destiny was bewailed:

"Where are the voices, whispering low,  
Of lovers side by side?  
And where the haughty dames who swept  
Thy terraces in pride?  
Where is the wild and joyous mirth,  
That drown'd th' Atlantic roar?  
Making the rafters ring again,  
With welcome to Glencore.  
"And where's the step of belted knight,  
That strode the massive floor?  
And where's the laugh of lady bright,  
We used to hear of yore?  
The hound that bayed, the prancing steed,  
Impatient at the door,  
May bide the time for many a year—  
They'll never see Glencore!"

"And he came back, after all—Lord Hugo,—and was taken prisoner at Ormond by Cromwell, and sentenced to death!" said Billy, "sentenced to death!—but never shot! Nobody knew why, or ever will know. After years and years of exile he came back, and was at the court of Charles, but never liked—they say dangerous! That's exactly the word—dangerous!"

He started up from his reverie, and taking his stick, issued from the room. The mist was beginning to rise, and he took his way towards the shore of the Lough, through the wet and tangled grass. It was a long and toilsome walk for one so old as he was, but he went manfully onward, and at last reached the little jetty where the boats from the main land were wont to put in. All was cheerless and leaden-hued over the wide waste of water; a surging swell swept heavily along, but not a sail was to be seen. Far across the Lough he could descry the harbor of Leenane, where the boats were at anchor, and see the lazy smoke as it slowly rose in the thick atmosphere. Seated on a stone at the water's edge, Billy watched long and patiently, his eyes turning at times towards the bleak mountain-road, which for miles was visible. At last, with a weary sigh, he arose, and muttering, "He won't come to day," turned back again to his lonely home.

To this hour he lives, and waits the coming of Glencore.















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